

LETTERS
WRITTEN IN
FRANCE,
IN THE SUMMER 1790,
TO A
FRIEND IN ENGLAND:
CONTAINING
VARIOUS ANECDOTES
RELATIVE TO THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION,
AND
MEMOIRS
OF
MONS. AND MADAME DU F—.

BY
HELEN MARIA WILLIAMS.

THE THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND,
M,DCC,XCII.



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MDCCLXXII



no doubt, perhaps, was ever repeated on

L E T T E R S

I shall send you once a week the de-

tails which I promise to publish

though I am well aware how very im-

portant I shall be to the public

inquiries which press upon my mind. It

is much easier to feel than to explain, than

to paint it; and all I shall be able to

give you will be a faint notion, to which

L E T T E R I.

I ARRIVED at Paris, by a very rapid journey, the day before the Federa-
tion; and when I am disposed to mur-
mur at the evils of my destiny, I shall
henceforth put this piece of good fortune
into the opposite scale, and reflect how
many disappointments it ought to coun-
terbalance. Had the packet which con-
veyed me from Brighton to Dieppe failed
a few hours later; had the wind been con-
trary; in short, had I not reached Paris
at the moment I did reach it, I should
not have

B

have



have missed the most sublime spectacle which, perhaps, was ever represented on the theatre of this earth.

I shall send you once a week the details which I promised when we parted, though I am well aware how very imperfectly I shall be able to describe the images which press upon my mind. It is much easier to feel what is sublime, than to paint it; and all I shall be able to give you will be a faint sketch, to which your own imagination must add colouring and spirit. The night before the Federation, by way of prelude to the solemnities of that memorable day, the Te Deum was performed at the church of Notre Dame, by a greater number of musicians than have ever been assembled together, excepting at Westminster Abbey. The Overture which preceded the Te Deum was simple and majestic; the music, highly expressive, had the power of electrifying the hearers: and near the conclusion



conclusion of the piece, the composer, by artful discords, produced a melancholy emotion; and then, by exciting ideas of trouble and inquietude, prepared the mind for a recitative which affected the audience in a very powerful manner, by recalling the images of that consternation and horror which prevailed in Paris on the 13th of July, 1789, the day before that on which the Bastille was taken. The words were, as well as I can recollect, what follows:—"People, your enemies advance, with hostile sentiments, with menacing looks! They come to bathe their hands in your blood! Already they encompass the walls of your city! Rise, rise from the inaction in which you are plunged, seize your arms, and fly to the combat! God will combat with you!" These words were succeeded by a chorus of instruments and voices, deep and solemn, which seemed to chill the soul. But what completed the effect was, when the

found of a loud and heavy bell mixed itself with this awful concert, in imitation of the alarm-bell, which, the day before the taking of the Bastille, was rung in every church and convent in Paris; and which, it is said, produced a confusion of sounds inexpressibly horrible. At this moment the audience appeared to breathe with difficulty; every heart seemed frozen with terror: till at length the bell ceased, the music changed its tone, and another recitative announced the entire defeat of the enemy; and the whole terminated, after a flourish of drums and trumpets, with an hymn of thanksgiving to the Supreme Being.

LETTER

LETTER II.

I Promised to send you a description of the Federation; but it is not to be described! One must have been present, to form any judgment of a scene, the sublimity of which depended much less on its external magnificence than on the effect it produced on the minds of the spectators. "The people, sure; the people were the sight!" I may tell you of pavilions, of triumphal arches, of altars on which incense was burnt, of two hundred thousand men walking in procession; but how am I to give you an adequate idea of the behaviour of the spectators? How am I to paint the impetuous feelings of that immense, that exulting multitude? Half a million of people assembled at a spectacle, which furnished every image that

can elevate the mind of man; which connected the enthusiasm of moral sentiment with the solemn pomp of religious ceremonies; which addressed itself at once to the imagination, the understanding, and the heart!

The Champ de Mars was formed into an immense amphitheatre; round which were erected forty rows of seats, raised one above another with earth, on which wooden forms were placed. Twenty days labour, animated by the enthusiasm of the people, accomplished what seemed to require the toil of years. Already in the Champ de Mars the distinctions of rank were forgotten; and, inspired by the same spirit, the highest and lowest orders of citizens gloried in taking up the spade, and assisting the persons employed in a work on which the common welfare of the State depended. Ladies took the instruments of labour in their hands, and removed a little of the earth, that they might

might be able to boast that they also had assisted in the preparations at the Champ de Mars; and a number of old soldiers were seen voluntarily bestowing on their country the last remains of their strength. A young Abbé of my acquaintance told me, that the people beat a drum at the door of the convent where he lived, and obliged the Superior to let all the Monks come out, and work in the Champ de Mars. The Superior with great reluctance acquiesced: "Quant à moi," said the young Abbé, "je ne demandois pas mieux*."

At the upper end of the amphitheatre a pavilion was built for the reception of the King, the Queen, their attendants, and the National Assembly, covered with striped tent-cloth of the national colours, and decorated with streamers of the same beloved tints, and fleurs de lys. The

B 4

white

* As for me, I desired nothing better.

white flag was displayed above the spot where the King was seated. In the middle of the Champ de Mars *l'Autel de la Patrie* was placed, on which incense was burnt by priests dressed in long white robes, with sashes of national ribbon. Several inscriptions were written on the altar; but the words visible at the greatest distance were, "La Nation, la Loi, & le Roi.*"

At the lower end of the amphitheatre, opposite to the pavilion, three triumphal arches were erected, adorned with emblems and allegorical figures.

The procession marched to the Champ de Mars, through the central streets of Paris. At La Place de Louis Quinze, the escorts, who carried the colours, received under their banners, ranged in two lines, the National Assembly, who came from the Tuilleries. When the procession

* The Nation, the Law, and the King.

sion passed the street where Henry the Fourth was assassinated, every man paused as if by general consent: the cries of joy were suspended, and succeeded by a solemn silence. This tribute of regret, paid from the sudden impulse of feeling at such a moment, was perhaps the most honourable testimony to the virtues of that amiable Prince which his memory has yet received.

In the streets, at the windows, and on the roofs of the houses, the people, transported with joy, shouted and wept as the procession passed. Old men were seen kneeling in the streets, blessing God that they had lived to witness that happy moment. The people ran to the doors of their houses, loaded with refreshments, which they offered to the troops; and crowds of women surrounded the soldiers, and holding up their infants in their arms, and melting into tears, promised to make their children imbibe, from their earliest

age, an inviolable attachment to the principles of the new constitution.

The procession entered the Champ de Mars by a long road, which thousands of people had assisted in forming, by filling up deep hollows, levelling the rising grounds, and erecting a temporary bridge across the Seine, opposite to the triumphal arches. The order of the procession was as follows :

A troop of horse, with trumpets.

A great band of music.

A detachment of grenadiers.

The electors chosen at Paris in 1789.

A band of volunteers.

The assembly of the representatives of the people.

The military committee.

Company of chasseurs.

A band of drums.

The Presidents of sixty districts.

The Deputies of the people sent to the Federation.

The

- The Administrators of the Municipality.
- Bands of music and drums.
- Battalion of children, carrying a standard, on which was written, *L'Espérance de la Patrie**.
- Detachment with the colours of the national guard of Paris.
- Battalion of veterans.
- Deputies from forty-two departments, arranged alphabetically.
- The Oriflamme, or grand standard of the Kings of France.
- Deputies from the regular troops.
- Deputies from the navy.
- Deputies from forty-one departments, arranged also alphabetically.
- Band of volunteer chasseurs.
- Troop of horse, with trumpets.
- The procession, which was formed with eight persons abreast, entered the Champ de Mars beneath the triumphal arches,

B 6 with

* The Hope of the Country.

with a discharge of cannon. The deputies placed themselves round the inside of the amphitheatre. Between them and the seats of the spectators, the national guard of Paris were ranged; and the seats round the amphitheatre were filled with four hundred thousand people. The middle of the amphitheatre was crowded with an immense multitude of soldiers. The National Assembly walked towards the pavilion, where they placed themselves with the King, the Queen, the Royal Family, and their attendants; and opposite this group, rose in perspective the hills of Passy and Chaillot, covered with people. The standards, of which one was presented to each department of the kingdom, as a mark of brotherhood, by the citizens of Paris, were carried to the altar, to be consecrated by the bishop. High mass was performed, after which Monsieur de la Fayette, who had been appointed by the King Major-General of the

the Federation, ascended the altar, gave the signal, and himself took the national oath. In an instant every sword was drawn, and every arm lifted up. The King pronounced the oath, which the President of the National Assembly repeated, and the solemn words were echoed by six hundred thousand voices; while the Queen raised the Dauphin in her arms, shewing him to the people and the army. At the moment the consecrated banners were displayed, the sun, which had been obscured by frequent showers in the course of the morning, burst forth; while the people lifted their eyes to heaven, and called upon the Deity to look down and witness the sacred engagement into which they entered. A respectful silence was succeeded by the cries, the shouts, the acclamations of the multitude: they wept, they embraced each other, and then dispersed.

You will not suspect that I was an indifferent

different witness of such a scene. Oh, no! this was not a time in which the distinctions of country were remembered. It was the triumph of human kind; it was man asserting the noblest privilege of his nature; and it required but the common feelings of humanity, to become in that moment a citizen of the world. For myself, I acknowledge that my heart caught with enthusiasm the general sympathy; my eyes were filled with tears; and I shall never forget the sensations of that day, "while
"memory holds her seat in my bosom."

The weather proved very unfavourable during the morning of the Federation; but the minds of people were too much elevated by ideas of moral good, to attend to the physical evils of the day. Several heavy showers were far from interrupting the general gaiety. The people, when drenched by the rain, called out, with exultation, rather than regret, * "Nous
sommes

* We are wet for the nation.

“sommés mouillés à la nation.” Some exclaimed, * “La révolution Française est cimenté avec de l’eau, au lieu de sang.” The national guard, during the hours which preceded the arrival of the procession, amused the spectators † *d’une dance ronde*, and with a thousand whimsical and playful evolutions, highly expressive of that gaiety which distinguishes the French character. I believe none but Frenchmen would have diverted themselves, and half a million of people, who were waiting in expectation of a scene the most solemn upon record, by circles of ten thousand men galloping ‡ *en dance ronde*. But if you are disposed to think of this gaiety with the contempt of superior gravity, for I will not call it wisdom, recollect that these dancers were the very men whose bravery formed the great epocha of French liberty; the heroes who demolished

* The French revolution is cemented with water, instead of blood.

† With dancing in a circle, ‡ In the round dance.

demolished the towers of the Bastille, and whose fame will descend to the latest posterity.

Such was the admirable order with which this august spectacle was conducted, that no accident interrupted the universal festivity. All carriages were forbidden during that day, and the entrances to the Champ de Mars were so numerous, that half a million of people were collected together without a crowd.

The people had only one subject of regret; they murmured that the King had taken the national oath in the pavilion, instead of performing that ceremony at the foot of the altar; and some of them, crowding round Mons. de la Fayette, conjured him to persuade the King to go to the altar, and take the oath a second time. * "Mes enfans," said Mons. de la Fayette, "le serment n'est pas une ariette, on ne peut pas le jouer deux fois."

Mons.

* My friends, the oath is not an air which can be played twice over.

Monf. de la Fayette, after the Federation, went to the Château de la Muette, where a public dinner was prepared for the national guard. An immense crowd gathered round him when he alighted from his horse, at a little distance from the château; and some Aristocrates, mixing themselves with the true worshippers of him who is so justly the idol of the French nation, attempted to stifle him with their embraces. He called out, “* *Mais, mes amis, vous m'étouffez !*” and one of his *aides de camp*, who perceived the danger of his general, threw himself from his horse, which he entreated Monf. de la Fayette to mount. He did so, and hastened to the château.

This incident reminds me of a line in Racine's fine tragedy of Britannicus, where Nero says,

† “ *J'embrasse mon rival, mais c'est pour l'étouffer.*”

Adieu.

* But, my friends, you stifle me.

† I embrace my rival, but it is to destroy him.

LETTER III.

THE rejoicings at Paris did not terminate with the ceremony of the Federation. A succession of entertainments, which lasted several days, were prepared for the deputies from the provinces, who were all quartered in the houses of the bourgeois, where they were received with the most cordial hospitality.

The night of the 14th of July the whole city of Paris was illuminated; and the next day *le ci-devant Duc*, now *Monf. d'Orleans*, gave a public dinner to the national guard in the hall of the *Palais Royal*. We walked in the evening round the gallery, from which we saw part of the crowd below amusing themselves by dancing, while others were singing in chorus the favourite national songs.

On

On the following Sunday the national guards were reviewed by Mons. de la Fayette in the Champ de Mars, which was again filled with spectators, and the people appeared more enthusiastic than ever in their applauses of their general. The Champ de Mars resounded with repeated cries of * "Vive Mons. de la Fayette!" On this day carriages were again forbidden, and the evening displayed a scene of general rejoicing. The whole city was illuminated, and crowds of company filled the gardens of the Tuilleries, from which we saw the beautiful *façade* of the Louvre lighted in the most splendid manner. In the Champs Elysées, where a fête was given to the Deputies, innumerable lamps were hung from one row of trees to another, and shed the most agreeable brilliance on those enchanting walks; where the exhilarated crowd danced and

* Long live Mons. de la Fayette.

and sung, and filled the air with the sound of rejoicing. Several parties of the national guard came from the Champs Elysées, dancing along the walks of the Tuilleries with a woman between every two men; and all the priests whom they met in their way, they obliged to join in the dance, treating them as women, by placing them between two soldiers, and sometimes sportively dressing them in grenadiers caps. Fire-works of great variety and beauty were exhibited on the Pont Neuf; and the statue of Henry the Fourth was decorated with the ornament of all others the most dear in the eyes of the people, a scarf of national ribbon. Transparencies of Mons. de la Fayette and Mons. Bailly were placed, as the highest mark of public favour, on each side of this revered statue.

But the spectacle of all others the most interesting to my feelings, was the rejoicings at the Bastille. The ruins of that execrable

execrable fortress were suddenly transformed, as if with the wand of necromancy, into a scene of beauty and of pleasure. The ground was covered with fresh clods of grass, upon which young trees were placed in rows, and illuminated with a blaze of light. Here the minds of the people took a higher tone of exultation than in the other scenes of festivity. Their mutual congratulations, their reflections on the horror of the past, their sense of present felicity, their cries of * "Vive la Nation," still ring in my ear! I too, though but a sojourner in their land, rejoiced in their happiness, joined the universal voice, and repeated with all my heart and soul, "Vive la nation!"

* Long live the Nation.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

BEFORE I suffered my friends at Paris to conduct me through the usual routine of convents, churches, and palaces, I requested to visit the Bastille; feeling a much stronger desire to contemplate the ruins of that building than the most perfect edifices of Paris. When we got into the carriage, our French servant called to the coachman, with an air of triumph, * “A la Bastille—mais nous n’y restons pas.” We drove under that porch which so many wretches have entered never to repass, and, alighting from the carriage, descended with difficulty into the dungeons, which were too low to admit of our standing upright, and so dark that we were obliged at noon-day to visit them with the light of a candle. We saw the
hooks

* To the Bastille—but we shall not remain there.

hooks of those chains by which the prisoners were fastened round the neck, to the walls of their cells; many of which, being below the level of the water, are in a constant state of humidity; and a noxious vapour issued from them, which more than once extinguished the candle, and was so insufferable that it required a strong spirit of curiosity to tempt one to enter. Good God!—and to these regions of horror were human creatures dragged at the caprice of despotic power. What a melancholy consideration, that

—— “ Man! proud man,
Drest in a little brief authority,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven,
As make the angels weep.”

There appears to be a greater number of these dungeons than one could have imagined the hard heart of tyranny itself would contrive; for, since the destruction of the building, many subterraneous cells have been discovered underneath a piece
of

of ground which was inclosed within the walls of the Bastille, but which seemed a bank of solid earth before the horrid secrets of this prison-house were disclosed. Some skeletons were found in these recesses, with irons still fastened on their decaying bones.

After having visited the Bastille, we may indeed be surprised, that a nation so enlightened as the French, submitted so long to the oppressions of their government; but we must cease to wonder that their indignant spirits at length shook off the galling yoke.

Those who have contemplated the dungeons of the Bastille, without rejoicing in the French revolution, may, for aught I know, be very respectable persons, and very agreeable companions in the hours of prosperity; but, if my heart were sinking with anguish, I should not fly to those persons for consolation. Sterne says, that a man is incapable of loving one woman

as he ought, who has not a sort of an affection for the whole sex; and as little should I look for particular sympathy from those who have no feelings of general philanthropy. If the splendor of a despotic throne can only shine like the radiance of lightning, while all around is involved in gloom and horror, in the name of heaven let its baleful lustre be extinguished for ever. May no such strong contrast of light and shade again exist in the political system of France! but may the beams of liberty, like the beams of day, shed their benign influence on the cottage of the peasant, as well as on the palace of the monarch! May Liberty, which for so many ages past has taken pleasure in softening the evils of the bleak and rugged climates of the North, in fertilizing a barren soil, in clearing the swamp, in lifting mounds against the inundations of the tempest, diffuse her blessings also on the genial land of France,

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and

and bid the husbandman rejoice under the shade of the olive and the vine!

The Bastille, which Henry the Fourth and his veteran troops assailed in vain, the citizens of Paris had the glory of taking in a few hours. The avarice of Mons. de Launay had tempted him to guard this fortress with only half the complement of men ordered by Government; and a letter which he received the morning of the 14th of July, commanding him to sustain the siege till the evening, when succour would arrive, joined to his own treachery towards the assailants, cost him his life.

The courage of the besiegers was inflamed by the horrors of famine, there being at this time only twenty-four hours provision of bread in Paris. For some days the people had assembled in crowds round the shops of the bakers, who were obliged to have a guard of soldiers to protect them from the famished multitude;

tude; while the women, rendered furious by want, cried, in the resolute tone of despair, * “ Il nous faut du pain pour nos enfans.” Such was the scarcity of bread, that a French gentleman told me, that, the day preceding the taking of the Bastille, he was invited to dine with a *Négociant*; and, when he went, was informed that a servant had been out five hours in search of bread, and had at last been able to purchase only one loaf.

It was at this crisis, it was to save themselves the shocking spectacle of their wives and infants perishing before their eyes, that the citizens of Paris flew to arms; and, impelled by such causes, fought with the daring intrepidity of men who had all that renders life of any value at stake, and who determined to die or conquer. The women too, far from indulging the fears incident to our feeble

C 2

sex,

* We must have bread for our children.

sex, in defiance of the cannon of the Bastille, ventured to bring victuals to their sons and husbands; and, with a spirit worthy of Roman matrons, encouraged them to go on. Women mounted guard in the streets, and, when any person passed, called out boldly, * “*Qui va là?*”

A gentleman, who had the command of fifty men in this enterprise, told me, that one of his soldiers being killed by a cannon-ball, the people, with great marks of indignation, removed the corpse, and then, snatching up the dead man's hat, begged money of the by-standers for his interment, in a manner characteristic enough of that gaiety which never forsakes the French, even on such occasions as would make any other people on earth serious. † “*Madame, pour ce pauvre diable qui s'est fait tuer pour la Nation!* —*Monf.*

* Who goes there?

† Madam, for this poor devil, who has been killed for the Nation!—Sir, for this unfortunate dog, who has been killed for the Nation!

—Monsieur, pour ce pauvre chien qui s'est fait tuer pour la Nation !" This mode of supplication, though not very pathetic, obtained the end desired ; no person being sufficiently obdurate to resist the powerful plea, * " qu'il s'est fait tuer pour la Nation !"

When the Bastille was taken, and the old man, of whom you have, no doubt, heard, and who had been confined in a dungeon thirty-five years, was brought into day-light, which had not for so long a space of time visited his eyes, he staggered, shook his white beard, and cried faintly, † " Messieurs, vous m'avez rendu un grand service, rendez-m'en un autre ; tuez-moi ! je ne fais pas où aller. "—" Allons, allons," the crowd answered with one voice, " la Nation te nourrira."

C 3

As

* Had been killed for the Nation.

† Gentlemen, you have rendered me one great service ; render me another—kill me ! for I know not where to go.—Come along, come along ; the Nation will provide for you.

As the heroes of the Bastille passed along the streets after its surrender, the citizens stood at the doors of their houses, loaded with wine, brandy, and other refreshments, which they offered to these deliverers of their country; but they unanimously refused to taste any strong liquors, considering the great work they had undertaken as not yet accomplished, and being determined to watch the whole night, in case of any surprise.

All those who had assisted in taking the Bastille, were presented, by the Municipality of Paris, with a ribbon of the national colours; on which is stamped, inclosed in a circle of brass, an impression of the Bastille, and which is worn as a military order.

The Municipality of Paris also proposed a solemn funeral procession, in memory of those who lost their lives in this enterprise; but, on making application to the National Assembly for a deputation

of

of its members to assist at this solemnity, the Assembly were of opinion that these funeral honours should be postponed till a more favourable moment, as they might at present have a tendency to inflame the minds of the people.

I have heard several persons mention a young man, of a little insignificant figure, who, the day before the Bastille was taken, got up on a chair in the Palais Royal, and harangued the multitude, conjuring them to make a struggle for their liberty, and asserting, that now the moment was arrived. They listened to his eloquence with the most eager attention; and, when he had instructed as many as could hear him at one time, he requested them to depart, and repeated his harangue to a new set of auditors.

Among the dungeons of the Bastille are placed, upon a heap of stones, the figures of the two men who contrived the plan of this fortress, where they were

afterwards confined for life. These men are represented chained to the wall, and are beheld without any emotion of sympathy.

The person employed to remove the ruins of the Bastille, has framed of the stones eighty-three complete models of this building, which, with a true patriotic spirit, he has presented to the eighty-three departments of the kingdom, by way of hint to his countrymen to take care of their liberties in future.

LETTER

LETTER V.

I AM just returned from a visit to Madame Sillery, whose works on education are so well known and so justly esteemed in England, and who received me with the most engaging politeness. Surely the French are unrivalled in the arts of pleasing; in the power of uniting with the most polished elegance of manners, that attentive kindness which seems to flow warm from the heart, and which, while it soothes our vanity, secures our affections. Madame Sillery and her pupils are at present at St. Leu, a beautiful spot in the rich valley of Montmorenci. Mons. d'Orleans has certainly conferred a most essential obligation upon his children, by placing them under the care of this lady. I never met

C 5

with

with young people more amiable in their dispositions, or more charming in their manners, which are equally remote from arrogance, and from those efforts of condescension which I have seen some great people make, with much difficulty to themselves, and much offence to others.

The Princess, who is thirteen years of age, has a countenance of the sweetest expression, and appears to me to be Adelaide, the heroine of Madame Sillery's Letters on Education, personified. The three Princes, though under Madame Sillery's superintendence, have also preceptors who live in the house, and assist in their education. The eldest Prince, Mons. de Chartres, is nearly eighteen years of age, and his attentive politeness formed a striking contrast, in my mind, to the manners of those fashionable gentlemen in a certain great metropolis, who consider apathy and negligence as the test of good-breeding. But if I was pleased with the
manners

manners of this young Prince, I was still more delighted to find him a confirmed friend to the new constitution of France, and willing, with the enthusiasm of a young and ardent mind, to renounce the splendor of his titles for the general good. When he heard that the sacrifice of fortune also was required, and that the immense property which he had been taught to consider as his inheritance, was to be divided with his brothers, he embraced them with the utmost affection, declaring that he should rejoice in such a division. To find a democratic Prince, was somewhat singular: I was much less surpris'd that Madame Sillery had adopted sentiments which are so congenial to an enlarged and comprehensive mind. This lady I have called Sillery, because it is the name by which she is known in England; but, since the decree of the National Assembly, abolishing the nobility,

she has renounced with her title the name of Sillery, and has taken that of Brulart.

She talked to me of the distinctions of rank, in the spirit of philosophy, and ridiculed the absurdity of converting the rewards of personal merit into the inheritance of those who had perhaps so little claim to honours, that they were a sort of oblique reproach on their character and conduct. There may be arguments against hereditary rank sufficiently convincing to such an understanding as Madame Brulart's: but I know some French ladies who entertain very different notions on this subject; who see no impropriety in the establishments of nobility; and who have carried their love of aristocratical rights so far as to keep their beds, in a fit of despondency, upon being obliged to relinquish the agreeable epithets of Comtesse or Marquise, to which their ears had been so long accustomed.

But

But let me do justice to the ladies of France. The number of those who have murmured at the loss of rank, bears a very small proportion to those who have acted with a spirit of distinguished patriotism; who, with those generous affections which belong to the female heart, have gloried in sacrificing titles, fortune, and even the personal ornaments, so dear to female vanity, for the common cause. It was the ladies who gave the example of *le don patriotique**, by offering their jewels at the shrine of Liberty; and if the women of ancient Rome have gained the applause of distant ages for such actions, the women of France will also claim the admiration of posterity.

The women have certainly had a considerable share in the French revolution: for, whatever the imperious lords of the creation may fancy, the most important events.

* The patriotic donation.

events which take place in this world depend a little on our influence; and we often act in human affairs like those secret springs in mechanism, by which, though invisible, great movements are regulated.

But let us return to Madame Brulart, who wears at her breast a medallion made of a stone of the Bastille polished. In the middle of the medallion, *Liberté* was written in diamonds; above was marked, in diamonds, the planet that shone on the 14th of July; and below was seen the moon, of the size she appeared that memorable night. The medallion was set in a branch of laurel, composed of emeralds, and tied at the top with the national cockade, formed of brilliant stones of the three national colours.

Our conversation on the subject of the Bastille, led Madame Brulart to relate an action of Mons. de Chartres, which reflects the highest honour on his humanity. Being in Normandy, he visited Mont St. Michel,

Michel, a fortress built on a rock which stands a league and a half from the coast of Normandy. The tide covers this space twice every twenty-four hours; but when it is low water, a person can pass over on foot. Mont St. Michel was originally a church, founded by a good bishop in the seventh century, in honour of St. Michel, who, it seems, appeared to him in a vision on this spot. Richard, the first Duke of Normandy of that name, afterwards converted the church into an abbey; and this abbey gave rise to the military order *des Chevaliers de St. Michel*, instituted by Louis the Eleventh. After having seen the precious relics of the abbey, the square buckler, and the short sword found in Ireland near the body of the well-known dragon, whose destruction is attributed to the prowess of St. Michel, Monf. de Chartres was conducted, through many labyrinths, to the subterraneous parts of the edifice; where he was shewn a wooden
cage,

cage, which was made by order of Louis the Fourteenth, for the punishment of an unfortunate wit, who had dared to ridicule his conquests in Holland, no sooner gained than lost. Monsi. de Chartres beheld with horror this instrument of tyranny, in which prisoners were still frequently confined; and, expressing in very strong terms his indignation, he was told, that, as a prince of the blood, he had a right, if he thought proper, to order the cage to be destroyed. Scarcely were the words pronounced, when the young Prince seized a hatchet, gave the first stroke himself to this execrable machine, waited to see it levelled with the ground, and thus may claim the glory of having, even before the demolition of the Bastille, begun the French revolution.

We found at St. Leu a young English lady, who is the companion of the Princess, and whose appearance is calculated to give the most favourable idea of English.

lish beauty. I never saw more regular features, or an expression of countenance more lovely: and Madame Brulart, by whom she has been educated, assured me that "the mind keeps the promise we had from the face." This young lady talked of her own country with a glow of satisfaction very grateful to my feelings. She seems to

"Cast a look where England's glories shine,

"And bids her bosom sympathise with mine."

LETTER

LETTER VI.

I HAVE been at the National Assembly, where, at a time when the deputies from the provinces engrossed every ticket of admission, my sister and I were admitted without tickets, by the gentleman who had the command of the guard, and placed in the best seats, before he suffered the doors to be opened to other people. We had no personal acquaintance with this gentleman, or any claim to his politeness, except that of being foreigners and women; but these are, of all claims, the most powerful to the urbanity of French manners.

My sister observed to me, that our seats, which were immediately opposite the tribune from which the members speak, reminded her of our struggles to attain the
same

same situation in Westminster Hall. But you must recollect, I answered, that we have attained this situation without any struggle. I believe, however, that if the fame of Mr. Fox's eloquence should lead a French woman to present herself at the door of Westminster Hall without a ticket, she might stand there as long as Mr. Hastings's trial has lasted, without being permitted to pass the barrier.

The hall of the National Assembly is long and narrow; at each end there is a gallery, where the common people are admitted by applying very early in the morning for numbers, which are distributed at the door; and the persons who first apply secure the first numbers. The seats being also numbered, all confusion and disorder are prevented. The galleries at the side of the hall are divided into boxes, which are called tribunes; they belong to the principal members of the National Assembly; and to these

these places company are admitted with tickets. Rows of seats are placed round the hall, raised one above another, where the Members of the Assembly are seated; and immediately opposite the chair of the President, in the narrow part of the hall, is the tribune which the Members ascend when they are going to speak. One capital subject of debate in this Assembly is, who shall speak first; for all seem more inclined to talk than to listen; and sometimes the President in vain rings a bell, or with the vehemence of French action stretches out his arms, and endeavours to impose silence; while the six Huissiers, persons who are appointed to keep order, make the attempt with as little success as the President himself. But one ceases to wonder that the meetings of the National Assembly are tumultuous, on reflecting how important are the objects of its deliberations. Not only the lives and fortunes of individuals, but the existence

existence of the country is at stake: and of how little consequence is this impetuosity in debate, if the decrees which are passed are wise and beneficial, and the new constitution arises, like the beauty and order of nature, from the confusion of mingled elements! I heard several of the Members speak; but I am so little qualified to judge of oratory, that, without presuming to determine whether I had reason to be entertained or not, I shall only tell you that I was so.

And this, repeated I with exultation to myself, this is the National Assembly of France! Those men now before my eyes are the men who engross the attention, the astonishment of Europe; for the issue of whose decrees surrounding nations wait in suspense, and whose fame has already extended through every civilized region of the globe: the men whose magnanimity invested them with power to destroy the old constitution, and whose wisdom is erecting

erecting the new, on a principle of perfection which has hitherto been thought chimerical, and has only served to adorn the page of the philosopher; but which they believe may be reduced to practice, and have therefore the courage to attempt. My mind, with a sensation of elevated pleasure, passing through the interval of ages, anticipated the increasing renown of these legislators, and the period when, all the nations of Europe following the liberal system which France has adopted, the little crooked policy of the present times shall give place to the reign of reason, virtue, and science.

The most celebrated characters in the National Assembly were pointed out to us. Monsieur Barnave de Dauphine, who is only six and twenty years of age, and the youngest member of the Assembly, is esteemed its first orator, and is the leader of the democratic party. I believe Mons. Barnave does not owe all his reputation

putation to his talents, however distinguished: his virtues also claim a considerable share of that applause which he receives from his country. He has shewn himself as steadfast in principle, as he is eloquent in debate. With firm undeviating integrity he has defended the cause of the people. Every motion he has made in the Assembly has passed into a law, because its beneficial tendency has been always evident; and it was he who effected that memorable decree which deprived the King of the right of making war, without the consent of the nation. *Monf. Barnave* is adored by the people; who have two or three times taken the horses from his carriage, and drawn him in triumph along the streets of Paris.

We also saw *Monf. Mirabeau l'aîné*, whose genius is of the first class, but who possesses a very small share of popularity. I am, however, one of his partisans, though

though not merely from that enthusiasm which always comes across my heart in favour of great intellectual abilities. Mons. Mirabeau has another very powerful claim on my partiality: he is the professed friend (and I must and will love him for being so) of the African race. He has proposed the abolition of the slave-trade to the National Assembly; and, though the Assembly have delayed the consideration of this subject, on account of those deliberations which immediately affect the country, yet, perhaps, if our senators continue to doze over this affair as they have hitherto done, the French will have the glory of setting us an example, which it will then be our humble employment to follow. But I trust the period will never come, when England will submit to be taught by another nation the lesson of humanity. I trust an English House of Commons will never persist in thinking, that what is morally
wrong,

wrong, can be politically right; that the virtue and the prosperity of a people are things at variance with each other; and that a country which abounds with so many sources of wealth, cannot afford to close one polluted channel, which is stained with the blood of our fellow-creatures.

But it is a sort of treason to the honour, the spirit, the generosity of Englishmen, to suppose they will persevere in such conduct. Admitting, however, a supposition which it is painful to make; admitting that they should abide by this system of inhumanity, they will only retard, but will not finally prevent the abolition of slavery. The Africans have not long to suffer, nor their oppressors to triumph. Europe is hastening towards a period too enlightened for the perpetuation of such monstrous abuses. The mists of ignorance and error are rolling fast away, and the benign beams of philosophy are spreading their lustre over the nations.—But

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whither

whither have these children of captivity led me? I perceive I have wandered a great way from the National Assembly, where I was so happily seated, and of which I will tell you more in my next letter.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

THE Abbé Maury is one of the most distinguished members of the National Assembly. He possesses astonishing powers of eloquence; but he has done his talents the injustice to make them subservient to the narrow considerations of self-interest. Had he displayed that ability in defence of civil and religious liberty, which he has employed in the service of the exorbitant pretensions of the church, he would have deserved the highest applause of his country; instead of which, he has called to the aid of his genius an auxiliary it ought to have scorned; that subtlety which tries "to make the worse appear the better reason;" and he is still more detested than admired. I am not surprised that a little mind is some-

times tempted by interest to tread in a mean and sordid path ; but I own it does astonish me that genius can be seduced from the fair field of honourable fame into those serpentine ways where it can meet with no object worthy of its ambition. " Something too much of this." You shall hear a repartee of the Abbé Maury, who, after having made a very unpopular motion in the Assembly, was insulted as he was going out ; the people crying, as they are too apt to do, * " A la lanterne." The Abbé, turning to the crowd, answered, with equal indignation and spirit, " † Eh ! Messieurs, si j'étois à " la lanterne, seriez-vous plus éclairés ?" The Abbé Maury, before the revolution, was in possession of eight hundred farms, and has lost sixty thousand livres a year in consequence of that event. But enough of

* To the lantern.

† If I were at the lantern, would you be more enlightened ?

of Monf. l'Abbé, whose picture I have just purchafed in a snuff-box. You touch a fpring, open the lid of the snuff-box, and the Abbé jumps up, and occasions much furprife and merriment. The joke, however, is grown a little ftale in France: but I fhall bring the Abbé with me to England, where I flatter myfelf his fudden appearance will afford fome diversion.

A fingular but very refpectable figure in the National Affembly is a Deputy from Britany, called Le Père Gerard. This venerable old man is a peafant, and his appearance reminds one of thofe times when Generals were called from the plough to take the command of armies. The drefs of Le Père Gerard is made of a coarfe woollen cloth, which is worn by the peafants of Britany, and is of fuch ftrong texture that a coat often descends from one generation to another. This cloth is called Pinchina; and the King, to whom the old Breton has prefented feve-

ral addressees from the Assembly, calls him, * *en badinage*, Le Père Pinchina. When I saw him, he had on this everlasting coat, and wore worsted stockings gartered above the knees. But what pleased me most in his appearance, were the long white hairs which hung down his shoulders; an ornament for which you know I have a particular predilection.

The respectable Père Gerard boasts that he is descended from a race of deputies, his great grandfather having been chosen as a deputy to *les Etats-Généraux* in 1614, the last time the States were held, before that memorable period when they effected the revolution.

At the time when the ladies set the example of † *le don patriotique*, by offering their jewels, and the members of the National Assembly, in a moment of enthusiasm,

* In pleasantry, Father Pinchina.

† The patriotic donation.

brass, took the silver buckles out of their shoes, and laid them on the President's table, the Père Gerard rose, and said, that he had no such offering to give, his buckles being made of brass, but that his *don patriotique* should be that of rendering his services to his country unpaid. The old man was heard by the Assembly with the applause he merited; and the people, on the day of the Federation, carried him from the Champ de Mars to his own house in triumph on their shoulders.

Messieurs Charles and Alexander Lameth, two brothers, and Mons. Rabeau de St. Estienne, are among the first patriots of the National Assembly, and have a very high reputation for talents. The French, who love what they call an * *équivoque*, tell you, *que Mons. Rabeau vaut deux d' Mirabeau.*

The meetings of the Assembly, though still tumultuous, are much less so than

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they

* A play upon words.

they were at their first commencement. A gentleman, who was present when the motion was made for abolishing monasteries; told me, that the minds of the Members were, on that occasion, inflamed to such a height, that it appeared to him very probable that the debate would end in a massacre. He mentioned a circum-

stance very characteristic of French vivacity. One of the Members was expressing himself in these words, "What is a Monk?"

A man who has renounced his father, his mother, every tie, every affection that is dear in nature! and for whom?"—before the speaker could finish his sentence, a Member from the other end of the hall seized the moment while the orator was drawing his breath, and called out, * "Pour
"une puissance étrangère," to the great horror of *le côté noir*, for so the clergy are called.

The

* For a foreign power.

The Democrats place themselves on one side of the hall, and the Aristocrats on the other. The spectators in the galleries take such a part in the debate, as frequently to express their applause by clapping their hands with great violence. An old Maréchal of France rose, the day I was at the Assembly, when they were debating on the military pensions, and declared, that, in recompense for the services which he had rendered his country, he desired honours, and not pay. The Assembly clapped him, and the galleries joined in this mark of approbation. A young Frenchman, who sat next me, whispered to me, * “*Monf. trouve apparemment que l'argent l'incommode.*”

The Members of the National Assembly are paid three crowns a day for their attendance; while in England a candidate for a seat in parliament often spends

D 5 many

* I suppose that gentleman finds money troublesome.

many thousand pounds, and, with magnificent generosity, makes a whole county drunk for a week, merely to enjoy the privilege of serving his country without pay.

The qualification requisite for a member of the National Assembly, is that of possessing sufficient property in land or houses to pay taxes to the amount of a *marc d'argent*, which is the value of four *louis*. Every hundred of the citizens, who pay taxes to Government of three days labour, or three *livres*, have a right to vote for an elector; whose qualification is that of paying taxes to the amount of ten *livres*, or ten days labour. The electors of one department meet together in one assembly, and choose, from among their own body, the persons who are to direct the administration of that department. Those electors will also choose, in the same manner, the deputies sent by that department to the National Assembly. There will

will therefore be only one intermediate degree between the lowest order of active citizens, and the members of the National Assembly.

I was interrupted by a visitor, who related a little incident, which has interested me so much, that I can write of nothing else at present, and you shall therefore have it warm from my heart. While the National Assembly were deliberating upon the division of property among brothers, a young man of high birth and fortune, who is a member of the Assembly, entered with precipitation, and, mounting the tribune, with great emotion informed the Assembly, that he had just received accounts that his father was dying; that he himself was his eldest son, and had come to conjure the Assembly to pass, without delay, that equitable decree, giving the younger sons an equal share of fortune with the eldest, in order, he said, that his father might have the satisfaction, before

he breathed his last, of knowing that all his children were secure of a provision. If you are not affected by this circumstance, you have read it with very different feelings from those with which I have written it: but if, on the contrary, you have fallen in love with this young Frenchman, do not imagine your passion is singular, for I am violently in love with him myself.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

YOU have not heard, perhaps, that on the day of the Federation at Paris, the national oath was taken throughout the whole kingdom, at the hour of twelve.

A great number of farmers and peasants walked in the procession at Rouen, bearing in their hands the instruments of their husbandry, decorated with national ribbons. The national guard cut down branches from the trees, and stuck them in their hats; and a French gentleman of my acquaintance, who understands English, and reads Shakespeare, told me, that it seemed like Birnham Wood coming to Dunsinane.

The leaders of the French revolution are men well acquainted with the human heart. They have not trusted merely to
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the force of reason, but have studied to interest in their cause the most powerful passions of human nature, by the appointment of solemnities perfectly calculated to awaken that general sympathy which is caught from heart to heart with irresistible energy, fills every eye with tears, and throbs in every bosom.

I have heard of a procession, which took place not long ago in one of the districts of Paris, in which five hundred young ladies walked dressed in white, and decorated with cockades of the national ribbon, leading by silken cords a number of prisoners newly released from captivity; and who, with their faces covered by long flowing veils, were conducted to a church, where they returned thanks for their deliverance.

Thus have the leaders of the revolution engaged beauty as one of their auxiliaries; justly concluding, that, to the gallantry and sensibility of Frenchmen, no argument

ment would be found more efficacious than that of a pretty face.

I have just read a private letter from a little town about two leagues from Montauban, called Negre-Pelisse, where the inhabitants, on the day of the Federation, displayed a liberality of sentiment which reflects honour, not only on themselves, but on the age in which we live. The national guard of this little town and its environs, were assembled to take the national oath. Half of the inhabitants being Protestants, and the other half Catholics, the Curé and the Protestant Minister ascended together one altar, which had been erected by the citizens, and administered the oath to their respective parishioners at the same moment; after which, Catholics and Protestants joined in singing Te Deum.

Surely religious worship was never performed more truly in the spirit of the Divine Author of Christianity, whose great precept

precept is that of universal love! Surely the incense of praise was never more likely to ascend to Heaven, than when the Catholics and Protestants of Negre-Pelisse offered it together!

This amiable community, when their devotions were finished, walked in procession to a spot where fireworks had been prepared; and, it being considered as a mark of honour to light the fireworks, the office was reserved for Monsi. le Curé, who, however, insisted on the participation of the Protestant Minister in this distinction; upon which the Minister received a wax taper from the Curé, and with him led the procession. The fireworks represented two trees: one, twisted and distorted, was emblematical of aristocracy, and was soon entirely consumed; when a tall, strait plant, figurative of patriotism, appeared to rise from the ashes of the former, and continued to burn with undiminished splendour.

When

When we look back on the ignorance, the superstition, the barbarous persecutions of Gothic times, is it not something to be thankful for, that we exist at this enlightened period, when such evils are no more; when particular tenets of religious belief are no longer imputed as crimes; when the human mind has made as many important discoveries in morality as in science, and liberality of sentiment is cultivated with as much success as arts and learning; when, in short, (and *you* are not one of those who will suspect that I am not all the while a good English woman) when one can witness an event so sublime as the French revolution?

LETTER

LETTER IX.

YESTERDAY I received your letter; in which you accuse me of describing with too much enthusiasm the public rejoicings in France, and prophesy that I shall return to my own country a fierce republican. In answer to these accusations, I shall observe, that it is very difficult, with common sensibility, to avoid sympathising in general happiness. My love of the French revolution is the natural result of this sympathy; and therefore my political creed is entirely an affair of the heart; for I have not been so absurd as to consult my head upon matters of which it is so incapable of judging. If I were at Rome, you would not be surprised to hear that I had visited, with the warmest reverence, every spot where any
relics

relics of her ancient grandeur could be traced ; that I had flown to the capitol ; that I had kissed the earth on which the Roman senate sat in council: And can you then expect me to have seen the Federation at the Champ de Mars, and the National Assembly of France, with indifference ? Before you insist that I ought to have done so, point out to me, in the page of Roman history, a spectacle more solemn, more affecting, than the Champ de Mars exhibited ; or more magnanimous, more noble efforts in the cause of liberty than have been made by the National Assembly. Whether the new form of government, establishing in France, be more or less perfect than our own,

“ Who shall decide, when doctors disagree,

“ And soundest casuists doubt, like you and me ? ”

I fancy we had better leave the determination of this question in the hands of posterity. In the mean time, I wish that

some

some of our political critics would speak with less contempt, than they are apt to do, of the new constitution of France, and no longer repeat after one another the trite remark, that the French have gone too far, because they have gone farther than ourselves; as if it were not possible that that degree of influence which is perfectly safe in the hand of the executive part of our government, might be dangerous, at this crisis, to the liberty of France: but be this as it may, it appears evident that the temple of Freedom which they are erecting, even if imperfect in some of its proportions, must be preferable to the old gloomy Gothic fabric which they have laid in ruins. And therefore, when I hear my good countrymen, who guard their own rights with such unremitting vigilance, and who would rather part with life than liberty, speak with contempt of the French for having imbibed the noble lesson which England has taught, I cannot
but

but suspect that some mean jealousy lurks beneath the ungenerous censure. I cannot but suspect, that, while the fair and honourable traders of our commercial country act with the most liberal spirit in their ordinary dealings with other nations, they wish to make a monopoly of liberty, and are angry that France should claim a share of that precious property; by which, however, she may surely be enriched, without our being impoverished. The French, on the contrary, seem to have imbibed, with the principles of liberty, the strongest sentiments of respect and friendship towards that people, whom they gratefully acknowledge to have been their masters in this science. They are, to use their own phrase, * “devenus fous des Anglois,” and fondly imagine that the applause they have received from a society of philosophers in our country, is the general voice of the nation.

Whether

* Become madly fond of the English.

Whether the new constitution be composed of durable materials or not, I leave to politicians to determine; but it requires no extraordinary sagacity to pronounce, that the French will henceforth be free. The love of liberty has pervaded all ranks of the people, who, if its blessings must be purchased with blood, will not shrink from paying the price:

“ While ev’n the peasant boasts his rights to scan,
“ And learns to venerate himself as man.”

The enthusiastic spirit of liberty displays itself, not merely on the days of solemn ceremonies—occupies not only every serious deliberation—but is mingled with the gaiety of social enjoyment. When they converse, liberty is the theme of discourse; when they dance, the figure of the cotillon is adapted to a national tune; and, when they sing, it is but to repeat a vow of fidelity to the constitution, at which all who are present instantly

stantly join in chorus, and sportively lift up their hands in confirmation of this favourite sentiment.

In every street, you see children performing the military exercise, and carrying banners made of paper of the national colours, wearing grenadiers caps of the same composition, and armed, though not like Jack the Giant-killer, with swords of sharpness.

Upon the whole, Liberty appears in France adorned with the freshness of youth, and is loved with the ardour of passion. In England she is seen in her matron state, and, like other ladies at that period, is beheld with sober veneration.

With respect to myself, I must acknowledge, that, in my admiration of the revolution in France, I blend the feelings of private friendship with my sympathy in public blessings; since the old constitution is connected in my mind with the image of a friend confined in the gloomy

gloomy recesses of a dungeon, and pining in hopeless captivity; while, with the new constitution, I unite the soothing idea of his return to prosperity, honours, and happiness.

This person is Mons. du F——, whose lady I am come to France to visit. They are friends with whom I wept in the day of their adversity, and with whom in their prosperity I have hastened to rejoice. Their history is most affecting; and, when I leave the hurry of Paris, to accompany them to their Château in Normandy, I will make you acquainted with incidents as pathetic as romance itself can furnish. Adieu!

LETTER

LETTER X.

WE have been driving at a furious rate, for several days past, through the city of Paris, which, I think, bears the same resemblance to London (if you will allow me the indulgence of a simile) that the grand natural objects in a rude and barren country bear to the tame but regular beauties of a scene rich with cultivation. The streets of Paris are narrow, dark, and dirty; but we are repaid for this by noble edifices, which powerfully interest the attention. The streets of London are broad, airy, light, and elegant; but I need not tell you that they lead scarcely to any edifices at which foreigners do not look with contempt. London has, therefore, most of the beautiful, and Paris of the sublime, according to Mr. Burke's definition

nition of these qualities; for, I assure you, a sensation of terror is not wanting to the sublimity of Paris, while the coachman drives through the streets with the impetuosity of a Frenchman, and one expects every step the horses take to be fatal to the foot-passengers, who are heard exclaiming, * “*Que les rues de Paris sont aristocrates.*” By the way, *aristocratie*, and *à la nation*, are become cant terms, which, as Sterne said of *tant pis*, and *tant mieux*, may now be considered as two of the great hinges in French conversation. Every thing tiresome or unpleasant, “*c’est une aristocratie!*” and every thing charming and agreeable is, “*à la nation.*”

I have seen all the fine buildings at Paris, and fancy I should have admired the *façade* of the Louvre, the beautiful new church of St. Genevieve, and some other edifices, even if I had not been told

* That the streets of Paris are aristocrates.

told previously, by a connoisseur in these matters, the precise degree of admiration which it was proper to bestow on every public building in Paris; but, having received such minute instructions on this subject, I can form but an imperfect notion of my own taste for architecture.

At the request of Madame Brulart, Monf. de Chartres sent orders for our admission to the Palais Royal, which is not at present shewn to the public. Of the collection of pictures I am incapable of saying any thing, and enough has been already said by those who understand its merits. Fine painting gives me considerable pleasure, but has not the power of calling forth my sensibility like fine poetry; and I am willing to believe that the art I love is the most perfect of the two; and that it would have been impossible for the pencil of Raphael to convey all those ideas to the mind, and excite all

those emotions in the heart, which are awakened by the pen of Shakespeare.

I confess, the only picture in Paris which has cost me any tears, is that of La Val-
liere, in the convent of the Carmelites. She is represented in the habit of a Carmelite: all the former ornaments of her person lie scattered at her feet; and her eyes are cast up to heaven, with a look of the deepest anguish. While I gazed at her picture, I lamented that sensibility which led into the most fatal errors a mind that seems to have been formed for virtue, and which, even in the bosom of pleasure, bewailed its own weakness. How can one forbear regretting, that the capricious inconstant monarch, to whom she gave her heart, should have inspired a passion of which he was so unworthy; a passion which appears to have been wholly unmixed with interest, vanity, or ambition? And how can one avoid pity-
ing

ing the desolate penitent, who, for so many years, in the dismal gloom of a convent, deplored her errors, and felt at once the bitterness of remorse, and the agony of disappointed love? while, probably,

“ In every hymn she seem’d his voice to hear,

“ And dropp’d with every bead, too soft a tear!”

If the figure of this beautiful Carmelite had not come across my imagination, I should have told you sooner, that the Palais Royal is a square, of which the Duc d’Orleans’s palace forms one side. You walk under piazzas round this square, which is surrounded with coffee-houses, and shops displaying a variety of ribbons, trinkets, and caricature prints, which are now as common at Paris as at London. The walks under the piazzas are crowded with people: and in the upper part of the square, tents are placed, where coffee, lemonade, ices, &c. are sold. Nothing is heard but the voice of mirth; nothing is seen but cheerful faces; and I have no

doubt that the Palais Royal is, upon the whole, one of the merriest scenes under the sun. Indeed, what is most striking to a stranger at Paris, is that general appearance of gaiety, which it is easy to perceive is not assumed for the moment, but is the habit of the mind, and which is, therefore, so exhilarating to a spectator of any benevolence. It is this which gives such a charm to every public place and walk in Paris. Kensington Gardens can boast as fine verdure, as majestic trees, as noble walks, and perhaps more beautiful women than the gardens of the Tuilleries ; but we shall look in vain for that sprightly animation, that everlasting cheerfulness, which render the Tuilleries so enchanting.

We have just returned from the Hôpital des Invalides, a noble building, adorned with fine paintings which record the history of some celebrated saints, whose exploits were recounted with incredible

credible rapidity by the man who conducted us through the chapels, and who seemed to think that nothing could be more absurd than our curiosity, after having heard these stories from his lips, to observe how they were told by the painters.

As we passed through the church, we saw several old soldiers kneeling at the confessionals, with that solemn devotion which seemed undisturbed by our intrusion, and fixed upon "the things that are above."

A few days before the taking of the Bastille, a crowd of the Parisians assembled at the Hôpital des Invalides, and demanded arms of the old soldiers; who answered that they were the friends of their fellow-citizens, but durst not deliver up their arms without the appearance of a contest; and therefore desired that the people would assemble before the gates in greater numbers the next day, when,

after firing a little powder upon them, they would throw down their arms. The people accordingly returned the following day; and the invalids, after a faint show of resistance, threw down their arms, which the citizens took up, embraced the old men, and then departed.

We stopped yesterday at La Maison de Ville, and went into a large apartment, where the mayor and corporation assemble. The walls are hung round with pictures of Kings and Dukes, which I looked at with much less respect than at the chair on which Monsr. Bailly sits. If his picture should ever be placed in this apartment, I fancy that, in the estimation of posterity, it will obtain precedency over all the Princes in the collection.

As we came out of La Maison de Ville, we were shewn, immediately opposite, the far-famed * *lanterne*, at which, for want of a gallows, the first victims

* The lamp-iron.

of popular fury were sacrificed. I own that the sight of *la lanterne* chilled the blood within my veins. At that moment, for the first time, I lamented the revolution; and, forgetting the imprudence, or the guilt, of those unfortunate men, could only reflect with horror on the dreadful expiation they had made. I painted in my imagination the agonies of their families and friends; nor could I for a considerable time chase these gloomy images from my thoughts.

It is for ever to be regretted, that so dark a shade of ferocious revenge was thrown across the glories of the revolution. But, alas! where do the records of history point out a revolution unstained by some actions of barbarity? When do the passions of human nature rise to that pitch which produces great events, without wandering into some irregularities? If the French revolution should cost no farther bloodshed, it must be allowed,

notwithstanding a few shocking instances of public vengeance, that the liberty of twenty-four millions of people will have been purchased at a far cheaper rate than could ever have been expected from the former experience of the world.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

WE are just returned from Versailles, where I could not help fancying I saw, in the back ground of that magnificent abode of a despot, the gloomy dungeons of the Bastille, which still haunt my imagination, and prevented my being much dazzled by the splendour of this superb palace.

We were shewn the passages through which the Queen escaped from her own apartment to the King's, on the memorable night when the *Poissardes* visited Versailles, and also the balcony at which she stood with the Dauphin in her arms, when, after having remained a few hours concealed in some secret recess of the palace, it was thought proper to comply with the desire of the crowd, who re-

peatedly demanded her presence. I could not help moralizing a little, on being told that the apartment to which this balcony belongs, is the very room in which Louis the Fourteenth died; little suspecting what a scene would, in the course of a few years, be acted on that spot.

All the bread which could be procured in the town of Versailles, was distributed among the *Poissardes*; who, with savage ferocity, held up their morsels of bread on their bloody pikes, towards the balcony where the Queen stood, crying, in a tone of defiance, * “*Nous avons du pain!*”

During the whole of the journey from Versailles to Paris, the Queen held the Dauphin in her arms, who had been previously taught to put his infant hands together, and attempt to soften the enraged multitude by repeating, † “*Grace pour maman!*”

Monf.

* We now have bread.

† Spare mama!

Monf. de la Fayette prevented the whole Gardes du Corps from being massacred at Versailles, by calling to the incensed people, * “Le Roi vous demande “ grace pour ses Gardes du Corps.” The voice of Monf. de la Fayette was listened to, and obeyed. The Gardes du Corps were spared; with whom, before they set out for Paris, the people exchanged clothes, giving them also national cockades; and, as a farther protection from danger, part of the crowd mounted on the horses of the Gardes du Corps, each man taking an officer behind him. Before the King came out of La Maison de Ville, Monf. de la Fayette appeared, and told the multitude, who had preserved an indignant silence the whole way from Versailles to Paris, that the King had expressed sentiments of the strongest affection for his people, and had accepted the national cockade; and that he (Monf. de

* The King begs of you to spare his body-guards.

de la Fayette) hoped, when his Majesty came out of La Maison de Ville, they would testify their gratitude. In a few minutes the King appeared, and was received with the loudest acclamations.

When the Queen was lately asked to give her deposition on the attempt which, it is said, was made to assassinate her, by the *Poissardes* at Versailles, she answered, with great prudence, “* Jai tout vu, tout entendu, & tout oublié!”

The King is now extremely popular, and the people sing in the streets, to the old tune of † “Vive Henri Quatre!” &c. “Vive Louis Seize!”

The Queen is, I am told, much altered lately in her appearance, but she is still a fine woman. Madame is a beautiful girl; and the Dauphin, who is about seven years of age, is the idol of the people. They expect

* I saw every thing, heard every thing, and have forgot every thing.

† Long live Henry the Fourth. Long live Lewis the Sixteenth.

expect that he will be educated in the principles of the new constitution, and will be taught to consider himself less a king than a citizen. He appears to be a sweet engaging child, and I have just heard one of his sayings repeated. He has a collection of animals, which he feeds with his own hand. A few days ago, an ungrateful rabbit, who was his first favourite, bit his finger when he was giving him food. The Prince, while smarting with the pain, called out to his * *petit lapin*, "Tu es Aristocrate." One of the attendants inquired, "Eh ! Monseigneur, qu'est-ce que c'est qu'un Aristocrate." "Ce font ceux," answered the Prince, "qui font de la peine à Papa."

The King lately called the Queen, *en badinage*, Madame Capet ; to which she retorted very readily, by giving his Majesty

* Little rabbit, Thou art an Aristocrate.—And pray, my Lord, what is an Aristocrate?—Those who make my papa uneasy.

jesty the appellation of “ Monsieur * *Capot*.”

When *les Gardes Françaises* laid down their arms at Versailles, their officers endeavoured to persuade them to take them up. An officer of my acquaintance told me, that he said to his soldiers, † “ Mes
“ enfans, vous allez donc me quitter, vous
“ nem’aimez plus ? ” “ Mon officier,” they answered, “ nous vous aimons tous : s’il
“ s’agit d’aller contre nos ennemis, nous
“ sommes tous prêts à vous suivre ; mais
“ nous ne tirerons jamais contre nos com-
“ patriotes.” Since that period, whenever any of *les Gardes Françaises* appear, they are followed by the acclamations of the people,

* *Capot* is the French term at picquet, when the game is lost.

† My friends, you are going then to forsake me ; I possess none of your affection ?—Captain, they answered, we all love you ; and, if you will lead us against our enemies, we are all ready to follow you ; but we will never fire at our fellow-citizens.

people, and “ * Vivent les Gardes Françaises ! ” resounds from every quarter.*

While we were sitting, after dinner, at the inn at Versailles, the door was suddenly opened, and a Franciscan friar entered the room. He had so strong a resemblance to Sterne's monk, that I am persuaded he must be a descendant of the same family. We could not, like Sterne, bestow immortality, but we gave some alms; and the venerable old monk, after thanking us with affecting simplicity, added, spreading out his hands with a slow and solemn movement, † “ Que la
“ paix soit avec vous ! ” and then departed. I have been frequently put in mind of Sterne, since my arrival in France; and the first post-boy I saw in jack-boots, appeared to me a very classical figure, by recalling the idea of La Fleur mounted on his *bidet*.

* Long live the French Guards.

† Peace be with you.

LETTER XII.

WE have been at all the Theatres, and I am charmed with the comic actors. The tragic performers afforded me much less pleasure. Before we can admire Madame Vestris, the first tragic actress of Paris, we must have lost the impression (a thing impossible) of Mrs. Siddons's performance; who, instead of "tearing a passion to rags," like Madame Vestris, only tears the hearts of the audience with sympathy.

Most of the pieces we have seen at the French theatres have been little comedies relative to the circumstances of the times, and, on that account, preferred, in this moment of enthusiasm, to all the wit of Moliere. These little pieces might perhaps read coldly enough in your study, but

but have a most charming effect with an accompaniment of applause from some hundreds of the national guards, the real actors in the scenes represented. Between the acts, national songs are played, in which the whole audience join in chorus. There is one air, in particular, which is so universal a favourite, that it is called "le Carillon National:" the burden of the song is, *"*ÇA IRA.*" It is sung not only at every theatre, and in every street of Paris, but in every town and village of France, by man, woman, and child. "*ÇA IRA*" is every where the signal of pleasure, the beloved sound which animates every bosom with delight, and of which every ear is enamoured; and I have heard the most serious political conversations end by a sportive assurance, in allusion to this song, *que* "*ÇA IRA!*"

Giornowiche, the celebrated player on the violin, who was so much the fashion
last

* It will go on.

last winter at London, I am told, sometimes amused himself at Paris, by getting up into one of the trees of the Palais Royal, after it was dark, and calling forth tones from his violin, fit to "take the prison'd soul, and lap it in Elysium." He has frequently detained some thousands of people half the night in the Palais Royal, who, before they discovered the performer, used to call out in rapture, "Bravo, bravo! *c'est mieux que Giornowiche."

I am just returned from seeing the Gobelin tapestry, which appears the work of magic. It gave me pleasure to see two pictures of Henry the Fourth. In one, he is placed at supper with the miller's family; and in the other, he is embracing Sully, who is brought forward on a couch, after having been wounded in battle. Nothing has afforded me more delight, since I came to France, than the honours

† This is better than Giornowiche.

honours which are paid to my favourite hero, Henry the Fourth, whom I prefer to all the Alexanders and Fredericks that ever existed. They may be terribly sublime, if you will, and have great claims to my admiration; but as for my love, all that portion of it which I bestow on heroes, is already in Henry's possession.

Little statues of Henry the Fourth and Sully are very common. Sully is represented kneeling at the feet of this amiable Prince, who holds out his hand to him; and on the base of the statue are written the words which Sully records in his Memoirs: * "Mais levez-vous, levez-vous
" done, Sully; on croiroit que je vous
" pardonne."

While the statue of Henry the Fourth, on the Pont-Neuf, is illuminated and decorated with national ribbon, that of Louis the

* But rise, pray rise, Sully; they will believe I am forgiving you.

the Fourteenth, in the Place Victoire, is stripped of its former ostentatious ornaments; the nations which were represented enchained at his feet, having been removed since the revolution. The figure of Fame is, however, still left hovering behind the statue of the King, with a crown of laurel in her hand, which, it is generally supposed, she is going to place upon his head. But I have heard of a French wit, who inquired whether it was really her intention to place the laurel on his Majesty's head, or whether she had just taken it off.

In our ride this morning, we stopped at the Place Royale, where I was diverted by reading, on the front of a little shop under the piazzas, these words: "Robe-
" lin, * écrivain.—Mémoires & lettres
" écrites à juste prix, à la nation." I am
told

* Writer.—Memoirs and letters written at a moderate price, for the Nation.

told, that Mons. Robelin is in very flourishing business; and perhaps I might have had recourse to him for assistance in my correspondence with you, if I did not leave Paris to-morrow. You shall hear from me from Rouen.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

WE had a most agreeable journey from Paris to Rouen, travelling a hundred miles along the borders of the Seine, through a beautiful country, richly wooded, and finely diversified by hill and valley. We passed several magnificent *châteaux*, and saw many a spire belonging to Gothic edifices, which, it would seem, were built of such lasting materials, with the moral purpose of leading the mind to reflect on the comparatively short duration of human life. Frequently an old venerable cross, placed at the side of the road by the piety of remote ages, and never passed by Roman Catholics without some mark of respect, throws a kind of religious sanctity over the landscape.

We stopped to look at the immense
machine

machine which conveys water to Versailles and Marly. The water is raised, by means of this machine, sixty feet, and is carried the distance of five hundred. I never heard a sound which filled my mind with more horror than the noise occasioned by the movements of this tremendous machine; while, at the same time, the vast chasms, where the water foams with angry violence, make the brain giddy; and I was glad to leave these images of terror.

Part of our journey was performed by moon-light, which slept most sweetly upon the bank, and spread over the landscape those softened graces which I will not attempt to describe, lest my pen should stray into rhyme.

We passed the *château* of Rosni, a noble domain given to Sully by Henry the Fourth; a testimony of that friendship which reflects equal honour on the King and the Minister.

F

About

About three leagues from Rouen stands a convent, of which Abelard was for some time the Superior. It is still inhabited by a few monks, and is called *Le Couvent de deux Amans*. Had it been the monastery of the Paraclete, the residence of Eloïsa, I should have hastened to visit the spot,

“ Where, o’er the twilight groves and dusky caves,
 “ Long sounding isles, and intermingled graves,
 “ Black Melancholy sits, and round her throws
 “ A death-like silence, and a dread repose ;
 “ Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,
 “ Shades ev’ry flow’r, and darkens ev’ry green,
 “ Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,
 “ And breathes a browner horror on the woods.”

If it were not very difficult to be angry with such a poet as Pope, particularly after having just transcribed these exquisite lines, I should be so when I recollect how clearly Mr. Berington shews, in his History of Abelard and Eloïsa, the cruel injustice done by Pope to the sentiments of Eloïsa, who is too often made to speak a very different language in the poem, from that of her genuine letters.

On

On our way to Rouen we slept at Gallon, a town about five leagues distant. Our inn was close to the castle, which formerly belonged to the Archbishop of Rouen, and which is now the property of the nation. The castle is a venerable Gothic building, with a fine orangery, and parks which extend several leagues. The Archbishop, who is the Cardinal de la Rochefoucault, brother to that distinguished patriot the *ci-devant* Duc de la Rochefoucault, has lost a very considerable revenue since the revolution. He had an immense train of servants, whom it is said he dismissed, upon the diminution of his income, with all possible gentleness, giving horses to one, a carriage to another, and endeavouring to bestow on all some little alleviation of the pain they felt at quitting so good a master. It is impossible not to regret that the property of the Cardinal de la Roche-

foucault is diminished, by whom it was only employed in dispensing happiness.

After visiting the castle, I returned somewhat in mournful mood to the inn, where there was nothing calculated to convey one cheerful idea. The ceiling of our apartment was crossed with old bare beams; the tapestry with which the room was hung, displayed, like the dress of Otway's old woman, "variety of wretchedness;" the canopied beds were of coarse dirty stuff; two pictures, in tawdry gilt frames, slandered the sweet countenances of the Dauphin and Madame; and the floor was paved with brick. In short, one can scarcely imagine a scene more remote from England, in accommodation and comfort, than the country inns of France: yet, in this habitation, where an Englishman would have been inclined to hang himself, was my rest disturbed half the night by the merry

merry songs which were sung in an adjoining apartment, as gloomy as my own. But those local circumstances, which affect English nerves, never disturb the peace of that happy people, by whom, whether engaged in taking the Bastille, or sitting with their friends after supper, * *tout se fait en chantant.*

* Every thing is done singing.

LETTER XIV.

ROUEN is one of the largest and most commercial towns of France. It is situated on the banks of the Seine; has a fine quay, and a singular bridge, of barges placed close together, with planks fixed upon them: the bridge rises and sinks with the tide, and opens for vessels to pass.

The streets of Rouen are so narrow, dark, and frightful, that, to borrow an expression from Madame Sevigné, "elles abusent de la permission qu'ont les rues Françoises d'être laides." There are many figures of Saints to be seen from these ugly streets, placed in little niches in the walls. The Virgin Mary is seated in

* "They abuse the permission the French streets have of being ugly."

in one of these niches, with the infant in her arms; and in the neighbourhood is St. Anne, who has the credit of having taught the Virgin to read. Every night the general darkness of the town is a little dispelled by the lamps which the people place in the niches, * “pour éclairer les Saints.”

Rouen is surrounded by fine *boulevards*, that form very beautiful walks. On the top of the hill of S^c Catharine, which overlooks the town, are the ruins of a fort called St. Michell, from which Henry the Fourth besieged Rouen. I love to be put in mind of Henry the Fourth, and am therefore very well pleased that, whenever I go to walk, I can fix my eyes on the hill of S^c Catharine.

I always feel a little ashamed of my country, when I pass the spot where the Maid of Orleans was executed, and on

F 4 which

* “To light the Saints.”

which her statue stands, a monument of our disgrace. The ashes of her persecutor, John Duke of Bedford, repose at no great distance, within a tomb of black marble, in the cathedral, which was built by the English. One cannot feel much respect for the judgment of our ancestors, in choosing, of all places under the sun, the cathedral of Rouen for the tomb of him whose name is transmitted to us with the epithet of the *good* Duke of Bedford: for you have scarcely left the cathedral, before the statue of Jean d'Arc stares you in the face, and seems to cast a most formidable shade over the *good* Duke's virtues.

The cathedral is a very magnificent edifice; and the great bell is ten feet high, and weighs thirty-six thousand pounds. But, in France, it is not what is *ancient*, but what is *modern*, that most powerfully engages attention. Nothing in this fine old cathedral interested me so much as
the

the consecrated banner, which, since the Federation, has been placed over the altar, and on which is inscribed, “* Vivons libres, ou mourons!” I hope every Frenchman who enters the cathedral of Rouen, while he reads the inscription on the consecrated banner, repeats from the bottom of his soul, “Vivons libres, ou mourons!” But the French will, I trust, escape the horrors of civil war, notwithstanding the gloomy forebodings of the enemies of the new constitution.

A people just delivered from the yoke of oppression, will surely have little inclination to resume their shackles; to rebuild the dungeons they have so lately demolished; to close again those gloomy monastic gates which are now thrown open; to exchange their new courts of judicature, founded on the basis of justice and humanity, for the caprice of power,

Fig and

* Let us live free, or die.

† Let us live free, or die.

and the dark iniquity of *lettres-de-cachet*; to quench the fair star of liberty, which has arisen on their hemisphere, and suffer themselves to be once more guided by the meteor of despotism.

A very considerable number, even among the Nobility of France, have had the virtue to support the cause of freedom; and, forgetting the little considerations of vanity, which have some importance in the ordinary course of human affairs, but which are lost and annihilated when the mind is animated by any great sentiment, they have chosen to become the benefactors rather than the oppressors of their country; the citizens of a free State, instead of the slaves of a despotic Monarch. They will no longer bear arms to gratify the ambition, or the caprice of a Minister; they will no longer exert that impetuous and gallant spirit, for which they have ever been distinguished, in any cause unworthy of its efforts. The
fire

fire of valour, which they have too often employed for the purposes of destruction, will henceforth be directed to more generous ends. They will choose another path to renown. Instead of attempting to take the citadel of glory by storm, they will prefer the fame of an honourable defence, and, renouncing the sanguinary laurel, strive, with more exalted enthusiasm, to obtain the civic wreath. Yes, the French nation will inviolably guard, will transmit to posterity, the sacred rights of freedom. Future ages will celebrate, with grateful commemoration, the fourteenth of July; and strangers, when they visit France, will hasten with impatience to the Champ de Mars, filled with that enthusiasm which is awakened by the view of a place where any great scene has been acted. I think I hear them exclaim, "Here the Federation was held! here an assembled nation devoted themselves to freedom!" I fancy I see them pointing out the spot on

which the altar of the country stood. I see them eagerly searching for the place where they have heard it recorded, that the National Assembly were seated! I think of these things, and then repeat to myself with transport, "*I was a spectator of the Federation!*"

But these meditations have led me to travel through the space of so many centuries, that it is really difficult to get back again to the present times. Did you expect that I should ever dip my pen in politics, who used to take so small an interest in public affairs, that I recollect a gentleman of my acquaintance surprised me not a little, by informing me of the war between the Turks and the Russians, at a time when all the people of Europe, except myself, had been two years in possession of this intelligence?

If however my love of the French revolution requires an apology, you shall receive one in a very short time; for I
am

am going to Monf. du F——'s *château*, and will fend you from thence the history of his misfortunes. They were the infictions of tyranny; and you will rejoice with me that tyranny is no more.

Before I close my letter, I shall mention a singular privilege of the church of Rouen; which is, the power of setting free a murderer every year on the day of Ascension. It seems that in the time of King Dagobert, who reigned in the sixth century, a horrible and unrelenting dragon desolated the country, sparing neither man nor beast. St. Romain, who was then bishop of Rouen, asked for two criminals to assist him in an enterprize he had the courage to meditate against the dragon; and with these *aides-de-camp* he sallied forth, killed the monster, and delivered the country. In consequence of this miracle, Dagobert gave the successors of St. Romain the privilege of setting a murderer free every year on Ascension-day.

day. The bones of St. Romain are carried by the criminal in a gilt box through the streets: the figure of a hideous animal representing the dragon, though it is suspected of flandering his countenance, accompanies these venerable bones, and has generally a young living wolf placed in its maw, except when it is * *jour maigre*, and then the dragon is provided with a large fish. The counsellors of the parliament, dressed in their scarlet robes, attend this procession to a church, where high mass is said; and, these ceremonies being performed, the criminal is set at liberty; but it is only where there are some strong alleviating circumstances in the case of the offender, that he is suffered in this manner to evade the punishment of his crimes.

Yesterday, in a little town called Sotte Ville, joined to Rouen by the bridge, a political dispute arose between the Curé and

* Fast-day.

and his parishioners. The enraged Curé exclaimed, * “ Vous êtes une assemblée d’ânes :” to which one of the parishioners answered, with great calmness, † “ Oui, Monf. le Curé, & vous en êtes le pasteur.”

* You are an assembly of asses.

† Yes, Sir ; and you are our preacher,

LETTER

LETTER XV.

I HEARD * *la messe militaire*, on Sunday last, at a church where all the national guard of Rouen attended. The service began with the loudest thunder of drums and trumpets, and seemed more like a signal for battle than for devotion; but the music soon softened into the most soothing sounds, which flowed from the organ, clarinets, flutes, and hautboys; the priests chaunted, and the people made responses. The wax tapers were lighted; holy water was sprinkled on the ground; incense was burnt at the altar; and the elevation of the Host was announced by the sound of the drum; upon which the people knelt down, and the priest prostrated his face towards the earth. There

is

* The military mass.

is something affecting in the pomp and solemnities of these ceremonies. Indeed, the Roman Catholic worship, though a sad stumbling-block to reason, is striking to the imagination. I have more than once heard the service for the dead performed, and never can hear it without emotion; without feeling that in those melancholy separations, which bury every hope of the survivor in the relentless grave, the heart than can delude itself with the belief that his prayers may avail any thing to the departed object of its affections, must find consolation in thus uniting a tribute of tenderness, with the performance of a religious duty.

We have been at several convents at Rouen. The first to which we went was a convent of Benedictine Nuns. When we had entered the gates we rang a bell, and a servant appeared, and desired us to go up stairs to the parloir. We opened a wrong door, and found, in a room
grated

grated across the middle with iron bars, a young man sitting on one side of the grate, and a young nun on the other. I could not help thinking that the heart of this young man was placed in a perilous situation; for where can a young woman appear so interesting, as when seen within that gloomy barrier, which death alone can remove? What is there, in all the ostentation of female dress, so likely to affect a man of sensibility, as that dismal habit which seems so much at variance with youth and beauty, and is worn as the melancholy symbol of an eternal renunciation of the world and all its pleasures? We made an apology to the nun for our intrusion; and she directed us to another apartment, where, a few minutes after we had seated ourselves on one side of the grate, La Dépôttaire entered on the other, and told us that the Abbess, whom we had desired to see, was not yet risen from dinner; and La Dépôttaire hoped

we

we would wait a little; * “Parce que,” said she, “Madame l’Abbesse étoit obligée hier de se lever de table de bonne heure, & elle se trouvoit un peu incommodée.” You must observe that the Abbess dined at three o’clock, and it was now past six. At length this lady, who was so fond of long dinners, appeared. She is a woman of fifty, but is still handsome; has a frank agreeable countenance, fine eyes, and had put on her veil in a very becoming manner. We wished to be admitted to the interior part of the convent; and with this view a French gentleman, who was of our party, † “se mit à conter des histoires à Madame l’Abbesse.”

He told her that my sister and I, though English women, were Catholics, and wished to

* Because, said she, the Abbess was obliged to rise from table very soon yesterday, and found herself a little indisposed.

† Told a great many fables to the Abbess.

to be received into the convent, and even, if it had been possible, to take the vows. The Abbess inquired if he was quite sure of our being Catholics; upon which the gentleman, a little puzzled what to answer, insinuated that *Monf. du F——* had probably the merit of our conversion. "But I have heard," said the Abbess, "from Madame ——, that *Monf. du F——* has become a Protestant himself." *Monf. du F——*, who is truth itself, avowed his principles without hesitation; while the Abbess, turning to *La Dépôttaire*, exclaimed, * "Mais comme Monsieur est aimable! quels beaux sentimens! Ah, Monsieur, vous êtes trop bon pour que Dieu vous laisse dans l'erreur." "St. Augustin," continued she, "had once some doubts; I hope you will be a second St. Augustin: myself, and all my community,"

* How amiable he is! what noble sentiments! Ah, Sir, you are too good for God to leave you in error.

“munity, will pray for your conversion.”
La Dépositaire, who was a tall thin old woman, with a sharp malignant countenance, added, casting a look on Mons. du F——, full of the contempt of superior knowledge, “It is not surprising that a young
“man, after passing several years in Eng-
“land, that country of heretics, should
“find his faith somewhat shaken; but he
“only wants to be enlightened by Mons.
“le Curé de ——, who will immediately
“dissipate all his doubts.”

From the convent of the Benedictines we went to that of the Carmelites, where religion, which was meant to be a source of happiness in this world, as well as in the next, wears an aspect of the most gloomy horror. When we entered the convent, it seemed the residence of silence and solitude: no voice was heard, no human creature appeared; and when we rang the bell, a person, whom we could not see, inquired, through a hole in the wall,
what

what we wanted. On being informed that we wished to speak to the Supérieure, putting her hand through the hole, she gave us a key, and desired us to unlock the door of the parloir. This we accordingly did; and in a few minutes the Supérieure came to a thick double grate, with a curtain drawn at the inside, to prevent the possibility of being seen. Our French gentleman again talked of our desire to enter the convent, and begged to know the rules. A hollow voice answered, that the Carmelites rose at four in the morning in summer, and five in the winter:—"Obedient flumbers, that can wake and weep!"—That they slept in their coffins, upon straw, and every morning dug a shovel-full of earth for their graves; that they walked to their devotional exercises upon their knees; that when any of their friends visited them, if they spoke, they were not suffered to be seen; or if they were seen, they were not suffered

suffered to speak; that with them it was
 * *toujours maigre*; and they only tasted
 food twice a day.

Our Frenchman said, “† Il faut, Ma-
 dame, que ces demoiselles réfléchissent
 “ si cela leur convient.” The poor
 Carmelite agreed that the matter required
 some reflexion, and we departed.

As we returned home meditating on the
 lot of a Carmelite, we met in the street
 three nuns walking in the habit of their
 order. Upon inquiry, we were told that
 they had been forced by their parents to
 take the veil; and, since the decree of the
 National Assembly giving them liberty,
 they had obtained permission to pay a
 visit for three months to some friends who
 sympathised in their unhappiness, and
 were now on their journey.

The monks and nuns must, in a short
 time,

* Always a fast.

† These young ladies, Madam, must consider
 whether these regulations will suit them.

time, decide whether they will finally leave their cloisters or not; and the religious houses which are vacated will be sold. In the department of Rouen a calculation has been made, that, after paying every monk seven hundred, and every nun five hundred livres a year, out of the revenues of the religious houses, the department will gain sixty thousand livres a year. The monks and nuns above sixty years of age, who choose to leave their convents, will be allowed an annual pension of nine hundred livres.

A letter was read in the National Assembly, a few days ago, from a priest, intreating that the clergy might have permission to marry; a privilege which, it is thought, the Assembly will soon authorise. * “On a bouleversé tout,” said an old Curé, a fierce Aristocrate, with whom I was in company, † “& même on veut porter

* They have overturned every thing.

† And would even carry the profanation so far as to suffer the priests to marry.

"porter la profanation si loin que de
"marier les prêtres." It is conjectured,
however, that the younger part of the
clergy think of this measure with less
horror than the old Curé.

We arrived last night at Mons. du
F——'s *château*, without having visited,
during our stay at Rouen, the tomb of
William the Conqueror, who is buried at
Caen, a town thirty leagues distant. But
I have been too lately at the Champ de
Mars, to travel twelve leagues in order
to see the tomb of a tyrant.

Upon Mons. du F——'s arrival at the
château, all his tenants, with their wives
and daughters, came to pay their respects
to Monseigneur, and were addressed by
Monsieur and Madame with those en-
dearing epithets which give such a charm
to the French language, and are so much
more rejoicing to the heart than our for-
m appellations. Here a peasant girl
is termed, by the lady of the *château*,

G

"Ma

* “Ma bonne amie, Ma petite, Mon enfant ;” while those pretty monosyllables † *tu, ta*, &c. used only to the nearest relations, and to servants, impress the mind with the idea of that affectionate familiarity, which so gracefully softens the distance of situation, and excites in the dependant, not presumption, but gratitude. ‡ “Et comment te portes-tu, La Voie ?” said Mons. du F—— to one of his farmers. § “Assez bien, Monseigneur,” replied he ; “mais j’eus la fièvre à Pâques, à votre service.”

* My good friend, My little girl, My child.

† Thou, thy, &c.

‡ And how do you do, La Voie ?

§ Pretty well, my Lord ; but I had a fever last Easter, at your service.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

I EMBRACE the first hours of leisure, which I have found since my arrival at the *château*, to send you the history of my friends.

Augustin François Thomas du F—, eldest son of the Baron du F—, Counsellor of the Parliament of Normandy, was born on the fifteenth of July, 1750. His early years were embittered by the severity of his father, who was of a disposition that preferred the exercise of domestic tyranny to the blessings of social happiness, and chose rather to be dreaded than beloved. The endearing name of father conveyed no transport to *his* heart, which, being wrapt up in stern insensibility, was cold even to the common feelings of nature.

The Baron's austerities was not indeed confined to his son, but extended to all his dependants. Formed by nature for the support of the ancient government of France, he maintained his aristocratic rights with unrelenting severity, ruled his feudal tenures with a rod of iron, and considered the lower order of people as a set of beings whose existence was tolerated merely for the use of the nobility. The poor, he believed, were only born for suffering; and he determined, as far as in him lay, not to deprive them of their natural inheritance. On the whole, if it were the great purpose of human life to be hated, perhaps no person ever attained that end more completely than the Baron du F——.

His son discovered early a taste for literature, and received an education suitable to his rank and fortune. As he advanced in life, the treatment he experienced from his father became more and more

more intolerable to him, as, far from inheriting the same character, he possessed the most amiable dispositions, and the most feeling heart.

His mother, feeble alike in mind and body, submitted with the helplessness, and almost with the thoughtlessness of a child, to the imperious will of her husband. Their family was increased by two more sons, and two daughters; but these children, being several years younger than *Monf. du F——*, were not of an age to afford him the consolations of friendship; and the young man would have found his situation intolerable, but for the sympathy of a person in whose society every evil was forgotten.

This person, his attachment to whom has tinctured the colour of his life, was the youngest of eight children, of a respectable family of Bourgeois at Rouen. There is great reason to believe that her father was descended from the younger

branch of a noble family of the same name, and bearing the same arms. But, unhappily, some links were wanting in this chain of honourable parentage. The claim to nobility could not be traced to the entire satisfaction of the Baron; who, though he would have dispensed with any moral qualities in favour of rank, considered obscure birth as a radical stain, which could not be wiped off by all the virtues under Heaven. He looked upon marriage as merely a convention of interest, and children as a property, of which it was reasonable for parents to make the most in their power.

The father of M^{lle} Monique C—— was a farmer, and died three months before the birth of this child; who, with seven other children, was educated with the utmost care by their mother, a woman of sense and virtue, beloved by all to whom she was known. It seemed as if this respectable woman had, after the death

death of her husband, only supported life for the sake of her infant family, from whom she was snatched by death, the moment her maternal cares became no longer necessary; her youngest daughter, Monique, having, at this period, just attained her twentieth year. Upon the death of her mother, Monique went to live with an aunt, with whom she remained only a very short time, being invited by Madame du F——, to whom she was well known, to come and live with her as an humble companion, to read to her when she was disposed to listen, and to enliven the sullen grandeur of the *château*, by her animating vivacity.

This young person had cultivated her excellent understanding by reading, and her heart stood in no need of cultivation. Mons. du F—— found in the charms of her conversation, and in the sympathy of her friendship, the most soothing consolation under the rigour of parental tyranny.

Living several years beneath the same roof, he had constant opportunities of observing her disposition and character; and the passion with which she at length inspired him, was founded on the lasting basis of esteem.

If it was ever pardonable to deviate from that law, in the code of interest and etiquette, which forbids the heart to listen to its best emotions; which, stifling every generous sentiment of pure disinterested attachment, sacrifices love at the shrine of avarice or ambition; the virtues of Monique were such as might excuse this deviation. Yes, the character, the conduct of this amiable person, have nobly justified her lover's choice. How long might he have vainly sought, in the highest classes of society, a mind so elevated above the common mass!—a mind that, endowed with the most exquisite sensibility, has had sufficient firmness to sustain, with a calm and equal spirit, every transition

transition of fortune, the most severe trials of adversity, and perhaps what is still more difficult to bear, the trial of high prosperity.

Monf. du F—— had been taught, by his early misfortunes, that domestic happiness was the first good of life. He had already found, by experience, the insufficiency of rank and fortune to confer enjoyment; and he determined to seek it in the bosom of conjugal felicity. He determined to pass his life with her whose society now seemed essential not only to his happiness, but to his very existence.

At the solemn hour of midnight, the young couple went to a church, where they were met by a priest whom Monf. du F—— had made the confidant of his attachment, and by whom the marriage ceremony was performed.

Some time after, when the situation of his wife obliged Monf. du F—— to acknowledge their marriage to his mother,

she assured her son that she would willingly consent to receive his wife as her daughter, but for the dread of his father's resentment. Madame du F——, with tears of regret, parted with Monique, whom she placed under the protection of her brothers: they conducted her to Caen, where she was soon after delivered of a son.

The Baron du F—— was absent while these things were passing: he had been suspected of being the author of a pamphlet written against the Princes of the Blood, and an order was issued to seize his papers, and conduct him to the Bastille; but he found means to escape into Holland, where he remained nearly two years. Having made his peace with the Ministry, he prepared to come home; but before he returned, Monf. du F—— received intelligence that his father, irritated almost to madness by the information of his marriage, was making application

cation for a *lettre-de-cachet*, in order to confine his daughter-in-law for the rest of her life; and had also obtained power to have his son seized and imprisoned. Upon this, Mons. du F—— and his wife fled with precipitation to Geneva, leaving their infant at nurse near Caen. The Genevois seemed to think that the unfortunate situation of these strangers gave them a claim to all the offices of friendship. After an interval of many years, I have never heard Mons. or Madame du F—— recall the kindness they received from that amiable people, without tears of tenderness and gratitude.

Meanwhile the Baron, having discovered the place of his son's retreat, obtained, in the name of the King, permission from the Cantons of Berne and Friburg to arrest them at Lausanne, where they had retired for some months. The wife of le Seigneur Baillif secretly gave the young people notice of this design;

and on the thirtieth of January, 1775, they had just time to make their escape, with only a few livres in their pockets, and the clothes in which they were dressed. Mons. du F——, upon his first going to Switzerland, had lent thirty louis to a friend in distress. He now, in this moment of necessity, desired to be repaid, and was promised the money within a month: mean time, he and his wife wandered from town to town, without finding any place where they could remain in security. They had spent all their small stock of money, and were almost without clothes: but, at the expiration of the appointed time, the thirty louis were paid; and with this fund Mons. and Madame du F—— determined to take shelter in the only country which could afford them a safe asylum from persecution, and immediately set off for England, travelling through Germany, and part of Holland, to avoid passing through France.

They

They embarked at Rotterdam; and, after a long and gloomy passage, arrived late at night at London. An old and respectable man, who was their fellow-passenger, had the charity to procure them a lodging in a garret, and directed them where to purchase a few ready-made clothes. When they had remained in this lodging the time necessary for becoming parishioners, their banns were published in the church of St. Anne, Westminster, where they were married by the Curate of the parish. They then went to the chapel of the French Ambassador, and were again married by his Chaplain; after which, *Monf. du F——* told me, * “*Les deux*
“*époux vinrent faire maigre chère à leur*
“*petite chambre.*”

Monf. du F—— endeavoured to obtain a situation at a school, to teach the French language; but before such a situation

* The new-married couple kept a fast in their little apartment.

tion could be found, his wife was delivered of a girl. Not having sufficient money to hire a nurse, he attended her himself. At this period they endured all the horrors of absolute want. Unknown and unpitied, without help or support, in a foreign country, and in the depth of a severe winter, they almost perished with cold and hunger. The unhappy mother lay stretched upon the same bed with her new-born infant, who in vain implored her succour, wood of food having dried up that source of nourishment. The woman at whose house they lodged, and whom they had for some weeks been unable to pay, after many threatenings, at length told them that they must depart the next morning. Madame du F—— was at this time scarcely able to walk across her chamber, and the ground was covered with snow. They had already exhausted every resource; they had sold their watches, their clothes, to satisfy the cravings

ving of hunger; every mode of relief was fled—every avenue of hope was closed—and they determined to go with their infant to the suburbs of the town, and there, seated on a stone, wait with patience for the deliverance of death. With what anguish did this unfortunate couple prepare to leave their last miserable retreat! With how many bitter tears did they bathe that wretched infant, whom they could no longer save from perishing!

Oh, my dear, my ever-beloved friends! when I recollect that I am not at this moment indulging the melancholy cast of my own disposition, by painting imaginary distress; when I recollect not only that these were real sufferings, but that they were sustained by *you*! my mind is overwhelmed with its own sensations.—The paper is blotted by my tears—and I can hold my pen no longer.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

— — — — — “THE moral world,
 “ Which though to us it seem perplex’d, moves on
 “ In higher order; fitted, and impell’d,
 “ By Wisdom’s finest hand, and issuing all
 “ In universal good.”

Monf. and Madame du F—— were relieved from this extremity of distress at a moment so critical, and by means so unexpected, that it seemed the hand of Heaven visibly interposing in behalf of oppressed virtue. Early in the morning of that fatal day when they were to leave their last sad shelter, Monf. du F—— went out, and, in the utmost distraction of mind, wandered through some of the streets in the neighbourhood. He was stopped by a gentleman whom he had known at Geneva, and who told him that

he

* Thomson.

he was then in search of his lodging, having a letter to deliver to him from a Genevois clergyman. *Monf. du F——* opened the letter, in which he was informed by his friend, that, fearing he might be involved in difficulties, he had transmitted ten guineas to a banker in London, and intreated *Monf. du F——* would accept that small relief, which was all he could afford, as a testimony of friendship. *Monf. du F——* flew to the banker's, received the money as the gift of Heaven, and then, hastening to his wife and child, bade them live a little longer.

A short time after, he obtained a situation as French usher at a school; and *Madame du F——*, when she had a little recovered her strength, put out her infant to nurse, and procured the place of French teacher at a boarding-school. They were now enabled to support their child, and to repay the generous assistance of their kind friend at Geneva.

Monf.

Monf. and Madame du F—— passed two years in this situation, when they were again plunged into the deepest distress. A French jeweller was commissioned by the Baron du F—— to go to his son, and propose to him conditions of reconciliation. This man told Monf. du F—— that his father was just recovered from a severe and dangerous illness, and that his eldest daughter had lately died. These things, he said, had led him to reflect with some pain on the severity he had exercised towards his son; that the feelings of a parent were awakened in his bosom; and that, if Monf. du F—— would throw himself at his father's feet, and ask forgiveness, he would not fail to obtain it, and would be allowed a pension, on which he might live with his wife in England. In confirmation of these assurances, this man produced several letters which he had received from the Baron to that effect; who,

as

as a farther proof of his sincerity, had given this agent seven hundred pounds to put into the hands of Mons. du F—— for the support of his wife and child during his absence. The agent told him, that he had not been able to bring the money to England, but would immediately give him three draughts upon a merchant of reputation in London, with whom he had connexions in business; the first draught payable in three months, the second in six, and the third in nine.

Mons. du F—— long deliberated upon these proposals. He knew too well the vindictive spirit of his father, not to feel some dread of putting himself into his power. But his agent continued to give him the most solemn assurances of safety; and Mons. du F—— thought it was not improbable that his sister's death might have softened the mind of his father. He reflected that his marriage had disap-
pointed

pointed those ambitious hopes of a great alliance which his father had fondly indulged, and to whom he owed at least the reparation of hastening to implore his forgiveness when he was willing to bestow it. What also weighed strongly on his mind, was the consideration that the sum which his father had offered to deposit for the use of his wife, would, in case any sinister accident should befall him, afford a small provision for her and his infant.

The result of these deliberations was, that Monf. du F—— determined (and who can much blame his want of prudence?) he determined to confide in a father!—to trust in that instinctive affection, which, far from being connected with any peculiar sensibility of mind, it requires only to be a parent to feel—an affection, which, not confined to the human heart, softens the ferociousness of the tiger, and speaks with a voice that is heard amidst the howlings of the desert.

Monf.

Monf du F——, after the repeated promifes of his father, almoft confidered that fufpicion which ftill hung upon his mind, as a crime. But, left it might be poffible that this agent was commissioned to deceive him, he endeavoured to melt him into compaffion for his fituation. He went to the village where his child was at nurfe, and, bringing her fix miles in his arms, prefented her to this man, telling him, that the fate of that poor infant refted upon his integrity. The man took the innocent creature in his arms, kifled her, and then, returning her to her father, renewed all his former affurances. Monf. du F—— liftened and believed. Alas! how difficult is it for a good heart to fufpect human nature of crimes which make one blufh for the fpecies! How hard is it for a mind glowing with benevolence, to believe that the bofom of another harbours the malignity of a demon!

Monf. du F—— now fixed the time
for

for his departure with his father's agent, who was to accompany him to Normandy. Madame du F—— saw the preparations for his journey with anguish which she could ill conceal; but she felt that the delicacy of her situation forbade her interference. It was she who had made him an alien from his family, and an exile from his country: it was for her, that, renouncing rank, fortune, friends, and connexions, all that is esteemed most valuable in life, he had suffered the last extremity of want, and now submitted to a state of drudgery and dependance. Would he not have a right to reproach her weakness, if she attempted to oppose his reconciliation with his father, and exerted that influence which she possessed over his mind, in order to detain him in a situation so remote from his former expectations? She was, therefore, sensible that the duty, the gratitude she owed her husband, now required, on her part, the absolute

solute sacrifice of her own feelings: she suffered without complaint, and endeavoured to resign herself to the will of Heaven.

The day before his departure, *Monf. du F——* went to take leave of his little girl. At this moment a dark and melancholy presage seemed to agitate his mind. He pressed the child for a long while to his bosom, and bathed it with his tears. The nurse eagerly inquired what was the matter, and assured him that the child was perfectly well. *Monf. du F——* had no power to reply: he continued clasping his infant in his arms, and at length, tearing himself from her in silence, he rushed out of the house.

When the morning of his departure came, *Madame du F——*, addressing herself to his fellow-traveller, said to him, with a voice of supplication, “ I entrust
“ you, Sir, with my husband, with the fa-
“ ther of my poor infant, our sole pro-
“ tector

“ tector and support!—have compassion
 “ on the widow and the orphan!” The
 man, casting upon her a gloomy look,
 gave her a cold answer, which made her
 soul shrink within her. When Mons.
 du F—— got into the Brighthelmstone
 stage, he was unable to bid her farewell;
 but when the carriage drove off, he put
 his head out of the window, and conti-
 nued looking after her, while she fixed
 her eyes on him, and might have repeated
 with Imogen,

“ I would have broke mine eye-strings,

“ Crack’d them, but to look upon him; till the
 “ diminution

“ Of space had pointed him sharp as my needle:

“ Nay, follow’d him, till he had melted from

“ The smallness of a gnat to air; and then—

“ Then turn’d mine eye, and wept!”

When the carriage was out of sight, she
 summoned all her strength, and walked
 with trembling steps to the school where
 she lived as a teacher. With much dif-
 ficulty

difficulty she reached the door; but her limbs could support her no longer, and she fell down senseless at the threshold. She was carried into the house, and restored to life and the sensations of misery.

H LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

MONS. du F—— arrived at his father's *château* in Normandy, in June 1778, and was received by Mons. le Baron, and all his family, with the most affectionate cordiality. In much exultation of mind, he dispatched a letter to Madame du F——, containing this agreeable intelligence; but his letter was far from producing in her mind the effect he desired. A deep melancholy had seized her thoughts, and her foreboding heart refused to sympathise in his joy. Short, indeed, was its duration. He had not been many days at the *château*, when he perceived, with surprise and consternation, that his steps were continually watched by two servants armed with fuses.

His father now shewed him an *arrêt*,
which

which, on the 4th of June, 1776, he had obtained from the Parliament of Rouen against his marriage. The Baron then ordered his son to accompany him to his house at Rouen, whither they went, attended by several servants. That evening, when the attendants withdrew after supper, the Baron, entirely throwing off the mask of civility and kindness, which he had worn in such opposition to his nature, reproached his son, in terms of the utmost bitterness, for his past conduct, inveighed against his marriage, and, after having exhausted every expression of rage and resentment, at length suffered him to retire to his own apartment.

There the unhappy Mons. du F——, absorbed in the most gloomy reflexions, lamented in vain that fatal credulity which had led him to put himself into the power of his implacable father. At the hour of midnight his meditations were interrupted by the sound of feet approaching

his chamber; and in a few moments the door was thrown open, and his father, attended by a servant armed, and two * *Cavaliers de Maréchaussée*, entered the room. Resistance and supplication were alike unavailing. *Monf. du F——*'s papers were seized; a few louis d'ors, which constituted all the money he possessed, were taken from him; and he was conducted in the dead of night, July the 17th, 1778, to St. Yon, a convent used as a place of confinement near Rouen, where he was thrown into a dungeon.

A week after, his father entered the dungeon. You will perhaps conclude that his hard heart felt at length the relents of a parent: you will at least suppose, that his imagination being haunted, and his conscience tormented, with the image of a son stretched on the floor of this subterraneous cell, he could support the idea no longer, and had hastened

* Officers of justice.

to give repose to his own mind by releasing his captive. Far different were the motives of his visit. He considered that such was his son's attachment to his wife, that, so long as he believed he had left her in possession of seven hundred pounds, he would find comfort from that consideration, even in the depth of his dungeon. His father, therefore, hastened to remove an error from the mind of his son, which left the measure of his woes unfilled. Nor did he choose to yield to another the office of inflicting a pang sharper than captivity; but himself informed his son, that the merchant who was to pay the seven hundred pounds to his wife, was declared a bankrupt.

A short time after, the Baron du F—— commenced a suit at law against that agent of iniquity whom he had employed to deceive his son, and who, practising a refinement of treachery of which the Baron was not aware, had kept the seven

hundred pounds with which he was intrusted, and given draughts upon a merchant who he knew would fail before the time of payment. Not being able to prosecute this affair without a power of attorney from his son, the Baron applied to him for that purpose; but *Monf. du F——*, being firmly resolved not to deprive his wife of the chance of recovering the money for herself and her child, could by no treaties or menaces be led to comply. In vain his father, who had consented to allow him a few books, ordered him to be deprived of that resource, and that his confinement should be rendered still more rigorous; he continued inflexible.

Monf. du F—— remained in his prison without meeting with the smallest mark of sympathy from any one of his family, though his second brother, *Monf. de B——*, was now eighteen years of age; an age at which the sordid considerations

rations of interest, how much soever they may affect our conduct at a more advanced period of life, can seldom stifle those warm and generous feelings which seem to belong to youth. It might have been expected that this young man would have abhorred the prospect of possessing a fortune which was the just inheritance of his brother, and which could only be obtained by detaining that brother in perpetual captivity. Even admitting that his inexorable father prohibited his visiting the prison of his brother, his heart should have told him, that disobedience, in this instance, would have been a virtue: or, was it not sufficient to remain a passive spectator of injustice, without becoming, as he afterwards did, the agent of cruelty inflicted on a brother?

Where are the words that can convey an adequate idea of the sufferings of Madame du F—— during this period? Three weeks after her husband's departure

ture from England, she heard the general report of the town of Rouen, that the Baron du F—— had obtained a *lettre-de-cachet* against his son, and thrown him into prison. This was all she heard of her husband for the space of two years. Ignorant of the place of his confinement, uncertain if he still lived, perhaps her miseries were even more poignant than his. In the dismal solitude of a prison, his pains were alleviated by the soothing reflexion that he suffered for her he loved; while that very idea was to her the most bitter aggravation of distress. Her days passed in anguish, which can only be conceived where it has been felt; and her nights were disturbed by the gloomy wanderings of fancy. Sometimes she saw him in her dreams chained to the floor of his dungeon, his bosom bathed in blood, and his countenance disfigured by death: sometimes she saw him hastening towards her, when, at the moment that he was going

going to embrace her, they were fiercely torn asunder. Madame du F—— was naturally of a delicate constitution; and grief of mind reduced her to such a deplorable state of weakness, that it was with infinite difficulty she performed the duties of her situation. For herself, she would have welcomed death with thankfulness; but she considered that her child now depended entirely on her labours for support: and this was a motive sufficiently powerful to prompt her to the careful preservation of her own life, though it had long become a burden. The child was three years old when her father left England; recollected him perfectly; and, whenever her mother went to visit her, used to call with eagerness for her papa. The inquiry, in the voice of her child, of, “When shall I see my dear, dear papa?” was heard by this unhappy mother with a degree of agony which it were vain indeed to describe.

H 5. LETTER

LETTER XIX.

MONS. du F—— was repeatedly offered his liberty, but upon conditions which he abhorred. He was required for ever to renounce his wife; who, while she remained with her child in a distant country, was to receive from his father a small pension, as an equivalent for the pangs of disappointed affection, of disgrace and dishonour. With the indignation of offended virtue he spurned at these insulting propositions, and endeavoured to prepare his mind for the endurance of perpetual captivity.

Nor can imagination form an idea of a scene more dreadful than his prison, where he perceived with horror that the greatest number of those prisoners, who had been many years in confinement, had an appear-

appearance of frenzy in their looks, which shewed that reason had been too weak for the long struggle with calamity, and had at last yielded to despair. In a cell adjoining *Monf. du F——*'s, was an old man who had been confined nearly forty years. His grey beard hung down to his waist; and, during the day, he was chained by his neck to the wall. He was never allowed to leave his cell, and never spoke; but *Monf. du F——* used to hear the rattling of his chains.

The prisoners, a few excepted, were generally brought from their cells at the hour of noon, and dined together. But this gloomy repast was served in uninterrupted silence. They were not suffered to utter one word; and the penalty of transgressing this rule, was a rigorous confinement of several weeks. As soon as this comfortless meal was finished, the prisoners were instantly obliged to return to their dungeons, in which they

were locked up till the same hour the following day. Monf. du F——, in his damp and melancholy cell, passed two winters without fire, and suffered so severely from cold, that he was obliged to wrap himself up in the few clothes which covered his bed. Nor was he allowed any light, except that which during the short day beamed through the small grated window in the cieling of his dungeon.

Is it not difficult to believe that these sufferings were inflicted by a father? A father!——that name which I cannot trace without emotion; which conveys all the ideas of protection, of security, of tenderness; that dear relation to which, in general, children owe their prosperity, their enjoyments, and even their virtues!—Alas, the unhappy Monf. du F—— owed nothing to *his* father, but that life, which from its earliest period his cruelty had embittered, and
which

which he now condemned to languish in miseries that death only could heal.

A young gentleman, who was confined in a cell on one side of Mons. de F---'s, contrived to make a small hole through the wall; and these companions in misfortune, by placing themselves close to the hole, could converse together in whispers. But the Monks were not long in discovering this, and effectually deprived them of so great an indulgence, by removing them to distant cells. These unrelenting Monks, who performed with such fidelity their office of tormenting their fellow creatures, who never relaxed in one article of persecution, and adhered with scrupulous rigour to the code of cruelty, were called * "Les Frères de la sainte Charité." One among them deserved the appellation. This good old Monk used to visit the prisoners by stealth, and endeavour to administer.

* The Brothers of the Holy Charity.

minister comfort to their affliction. Often he repeated to Monsi. du F——, * “Mon
“ cher frère, consolez-vous; mettez votre
“ confiance en Dieu; vos maux seront
“ finis!”

Monsi. du F—— remained two years in prison without receiving any intelligence of his wife, on whose account he suffered the most distracting anxiety. He had reason to apprehend that her frame, which had already been enfeebled by her misfortunes, would sink beneath this additional load of misery, and that she would perhaps be rendered unable to procure that little pittance which might preserve herself and her child from want. At length one of his fellow-prisoners, who was going to regain his liberty, took charge of a letter to Madame du F——, and flattered him with the hope of finding

* My dear brother, be comforted; place your confidence in God; your afflictions will have an end.

ing some means of transmitting to him an answer.

The letter paints so naturally the situation of his mind, that I have translated some extracts from it.

“ My thoughts,” he says, “ are unceasingly occupied about you, and my dear little girl. I am for ever recalling the blessed moments when I had the happiness of being near you, and at that recollection my tears refuse to be controuled. How could I consent to separate myself from what was most dear to me in the world? No motive less powerful than that of seeking your welfare, and that of my child, could have determined me—and alas! I have not accomplished this end. I know too well that you have never received that sum of money which I thought I had secured for you, and for which I risked the first blessing of life. What fills my mind with the greatest horror,

“horror, in the solitude of my prison, is
“the fear that you are suffering difficul-
“ties in a foreign country. Here I re-
“main ignorant of your fate, and can
“only offer to Heaven the most ardent
“vows for your welfare.
“What joy would a letter from you
“give me! but I dare not flatter myself
“with the hope of such sweet consol-
“tion. All I can assure myself of is,
“that though separated, perhaps for ever,
“our souls are united by the most ten-
“der friendship and attachment. Per-
“haps I may not find it possible to
“write to you again for a long while :
“but be assured that no menaces, no suf-
“ferings, no dungeons, shall ever shake
“my fidelity to you, and that I shall
“love you to the last hour of my exist-
“ence. I find a consolation in the re-
“flexion that it is for you I suffer. If
“Providence ever permits us to meet
“again, that moment will efface the re-
“membrance.

“membrance of all my calamities. Live,
“my dearest wife, in that hope. I con-
“jure you to preserve your life for my
“sake, and for the sake of our dear little
“girl! Embrace her tenderly for me,
“and desire her also to embrace you for
“her poor papa. I need not recommend
“my child to the care of so tender a mo-
“ther; but I conjure you to inspire her
“mind with the deepest sense of religion.
“If she is born to inherit the misfortunes
“of her father, this will be her best source
“of consolation.

“Whatever offers may be made you
“by my father, I exhort you, never have
“the weakness to listen to them, but
“preserve your rights, and those of my
“dear little girl, which, perhaps, may
“one day be of some value. If you are
“still at Mrs. D——’s boarding-school,
“tell her that I recommend my wife and
“child to her compassion. — But
“what am I saying? I am ignorant if
“you

" you are still with her, ignorant whe-
 " ther the dearest objects of my affection
 " still live ! But I trust that Providence
 " has preserved you. Adieu ! May God
 " Almighty bless you, and my child ! I
 " never cease imploring him to have
 " pity on the widow and the orphan in a
 " land of strangers."

LETTER

LETTER XX.

YOU, my dear friend, who have felt the tender attachments of love and friendship, and the painful anxieties which absence occasions, even amidst scenes of variety and pleasure; who understand the value at which tidings from those we love is computed in the arithmetic of the heart; who have heard with almost uncontrollable emotion the postman's rap at the door; have trembling seen the well-known hand which excited sensations that almost deprived you of power to break the seal which seemed the talisman of happiness; you can judge of the feelings of *Monf. du F*—— when he received, by means of the same friend who had conveyed his letter, an answer from his wife. But the person who brought

brought the letter to his dungeon, dreading the risk of a discovery, insisted, that, after having read it, he should return it to him immediately. *Monf. du F* pressed the letter to his heart, bathed it with his tears, and implored the indulgence of keeping it at least till the next morning. He was allowed to do so, and read it till every word was imprinted on his memory; and, after enjoying the sad luxury of holding it that night on his bosom, was forced the next morning to relinquish his treasure.

On the 10th of October, 1780, the *Baron du F* came to the convent, and ordered the Monks to bring his son from his dungeon to the parloir, and leave them together. With the utmost reluctance *Monf. du F* obeyed this summons, having long lost all hope of softening the obdurate heart of his father. When the Monks withdrew, the *Baron* began upbraiding him in the most bitter terms,

terms, for his obstinate resistance to his will, which, he informed him, had availed nothing, as he had gained his suit at law, and recovered the seven hundred pounds. Monsr. du F—— replied, that the pain he felt from this intelligence would have been far more acute, had his wife been deprived, with his concurrence, of the money which was promised for her subsistence, and on the reliance of which promise he had been tempted to leave England. His father then inquired if he still persisted in his adherence to the disgraceful connexion he had formed; to which his son answered, that not merely were his affections interested, but that his honour obliged him to maintain, with inviolable fidelity, a solemn and sacred engagement. The rage of the Baron, at these words, became unbounded: he stamped the ground with his feet; he aimed a stroke at his son, who, taking advantage of this moment of frenzy, determined to attempt

attempt his escape; and, rushing out of the apartment, and avoiding that side of the convent which the Monks inhabited, he endeavoured to find his way to the garden, but missed the passage which led to it. He then flew up a stair-case, from which he heard the voice of his father calling for assistance. Finding that all the doors which he passed were shut, he continued ascending till he reached the top of the building, where, meeting with no other opening than a hole made in the sloping roof to let in light to a garret, he climbed up with much difficulty, and then putting his feet through the hole, and letting his body out by degrees, he supported himself for a moment on the roof, and deliberated on what he was about to do. But his mind was, at this crisis, wrought up to a pitch of desperation, which mocked the suggestions of fear. He quitted his hold, and, flinging himself from a height of nearly fifty feet,

feet, became insensible before he reached the ground, where he lay weltering in his blood, and to all appearance dead.

He had fallen on the high road leading from Rouen to Caen. Some people who were passing gathered round him; and one person having washed the blood from his face, instantly recognized his features, and exclaimed to the astonished crowd, that he was the eldest son of the Baron du F——. Upon examining his body, it was found that he had broken his arm, his thigh, his ankle-bone, and his heel, besides having received many violent bruises. He still remained in a state of insensibility; and, while these charitable strangers were using their efforts to restore him to life, the Monks hastened from their convent, snatched their victim from those good Samaritans who would have poured oil and wine into his wounds, and carried him to the infirmary of the convent, where he remained some weeks before

before he recovered his senses; after which he lay stretched upon a bed for three months, suffering agonies of pain.

His father, who had been the jailor, and almost the murderer of his son, heard of these sufferings without remorse, nor did he ever see him more. But, though he was sufficiently obdurate to bear unmoved the calamities he had inflicted on his child, though he could check the upbraidings of his own conscience, he could not silence the voice of public indignation. The report that *Monf. du F——* had been found lying on the road bathed in blood, and had in that condition been dragged to the prison of *St. Yon*, was soon spread through the town of *Rouen*. Every one sympathised in the fate of this unfortunate young man, and execrated the tyranny of his unrelenting father.

The universal clamour reached the ear of his brother, *Monf. de B——*, who now, for the first time, out of respect to
the

the public opinion, took a measure which his heart had never dictated during the long captivity of his brother, that of visiting him in prison. Mons. de B——'s design in these visits was merely to appease the public; for small indeed was the consolation they afforded to his brother. He did not come to bathe with his tears the bed where that unhappy young man lay stretched in pain and anguish; to lament the severity of his father; to offer him all the consolation of fraternal tenderness:—he came to warn him against indulging a hope of ever regaining his liberty—he came to pierce his soul with “hard unkindness’ alter’d eye, which
“mocks the tear it forc’d to flow.”

I will not attempt to describe the wretchedness of Madame du F——, when she heard the report of her husband’s situation. Your heart will conceive what she suffered far better than I can relate it. Three months after his

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fall,

fall, *Monf. du F*—— contrived, through the assistance of the charitable old monk, to send her a few lines written with his left hand. “My fall” (he says) “has made my captivity known, and has led the whole town of Rouen to take an interest in my misfortunes. Perhaps I shall have reason to bless the accident, which may possibly prove the means of procuring me my liberty, and uniting me again to you!—In the mean time, I trust that Providence will watch with paternal goodness over the two objects of my most tender affection. Do not, my dearest wife, suffer the thoughts of my situation to prey too much upon your mind. My arm is almost well : my thigh and foot are not quite cured ; but I am getting better.

“I could not suppress my tears on reading that part of your letter wherein you tell me that my dear little girl often asks for her papa.—Kiss her for me a
“thousand

“ thousand times, and tell her that her
“ papa is always thinking of her and her
“ dear mama. I am well convinced that
“ you will give her the best education
“ your little pittance can afford: but
“ above all, I beseech you, inspire her
“ young mind with sentiments of piety:
“ teach her to love her Creator: that is
“ the most essential of all lessons. Adieu,
“ dearest and most beloved of women!
“ Is there a period in reserve when we
“ shall meet again? Oh, how amply will
“ that moment compensate for all our
“ misfortunes!”

LETTER XXI.

AT length the Parliament of Rouen began to interest itself in the cause of Mons. du F——. The circumstances of his confinement were mentioned in that Assembly, and the President sent his Secretary to Mons. du F——'s prison, who had now quitted his bed, and was able to walk with the assistance of crutches. By the advice of the President, Mons. du F—— addressed some letters to the Parliament, representing his situation in the most pathetic terms, and imploring their interference in his behalf.

It is here necessary to mention, that Mons. de Bel B——, *Procureur-Général de Rouen*, being intimately connected with the Baron du F——'s family, had ventured to demonstrate his friendship for the

the Baron, by confining his son nearly three years on his own authority, and without any *lettre-de-cachet*. And, though Mons. de Bel B—— well knew that every species of oppression was connived at, under the shelter of *lettres-de-cachet*, he was sensible that it was only beneath their auspices that the exercise of tyranny was permitted; and in this particular instance, not having been cruel * *selon les règles*, he apprehended, that if ever Mons. du F—— regained his liberty, he might be made responsible for his conduct. He therefore exerted all his influence, and with too much success, to frustrate the benevolent intention of the President of the Parliament, respecting Mons. du F——. His letters were indeed read in that Assembly, and ordered to be registered, where they still remain a record of the pusillanimity of those men who suffered the

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authority

* According to rules.

authority of Mons. de Bel B—— to overcome the voice of humanity; who acknowledged the atrocity of the Baron du F——'s conduct, and yet were deaf to the supplications of his son, while, from the depth of his dungeon, he called upon them for protection and redress.

May the fate of the captive, in the land of France, no more hang suspended on the frail thread of the pity or the caprice of individuals! May Justice erect, on eternal foundations, her protecting sanctuary for the oppressed! and may humanity and mercy be the graceful decorations of her temple!

The Baron du F—— perceived that, notwithstanding his machinations had prevented the Parliament of Rouen from taking any effectual measures towards liberating his son, it would be impossible to silence the murmurs of the public, while he remained confined at St. Yon. He determined, therefore, to remove him

to

to some distant prison, where his name and family were unknown; and where, beyond the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Rouen, his groans might rise unpitied and unavenged. But the Baron, not daring, amidst the general clamour, to remove his son by force, endeavoured to draw him artfully into the snare he had prepared.

Monf. de B—— was sent to his brother's prison, where he represented to him, that, though he must not indulge the least hope of ever regaining his liberty, yet, if he would write a letter to Monf. M——, Keeper of the Seals, desiring to be removed to some other place, his confinement should be made far less rigorous. Monf. du F—— was now in a state of desperation, that rendered him almost careless of his fate. He perceived that the Parliament had renounced his cause: he saw no possibility of escape from St. Yon; and flattered himself, that in a place where he was

less closely confined, it might perhaps be practicable: and therefore he consented to write the letter required, which Mons. de B—— conveyed in triumph to his father. There were, however, some expressions in the letter which the Baron disapproved; on which account he returned it, desiring that those expressions might be changed. But, during the interval of his brother's absence, Mons. du F—— had reflected on the rash imprudence of confiding in the promises of those by whom he had been so cruelly deceived. No sooner, therefore, did Mons. de B—— put the letter again into his hands, than he tore it into pieces, and peremptorily refused to write another.

Soon after this, Mons. de B——, the ambassador of the tyrant, again returned to his brother with fresh credentials, and declared to him, that if he would write to the Keeper of the Seals, desiring to be removed from St. Yon, he should, in one fortnight

fortnight after his removal, be restored to liberty. Upon Mons. du F——'s asserting that he could no longer confide in the promises made him by his family, his brother, in a formal written engagement, to which he signed his name, gave him the most solemn assurance, that this promise should be fulfilled with fidelity. Mons. du F—— desired a few days for deliberation; and, during that interval, found means of consulting a magistrate of Rouen who was his friend, and who advised him to comply with the terms that were offered, after having caused several copies of the written engagement to be taken, and certified by such of the prisoners at St. Yon as were likely to regain their freedom; a precaution necessary, lest his own copy should be torn from his hands.

Thus, having neither trusted to the affection, the mercy, or the remorse of those within whose bosoms such sentiments were

L 5 extinguished,

extinguished; having bargained, by a written agreement, with a father and a brother, for his release from the horrors of perpetual captivity, Monf. du F—— wrote the letter required.

Soon after, an order was sent from Versailles for his release from the prison of St. Yon, and with it a *lettre-de-cachet*, whereby he was exiled to Beauvais, with a command not to leave that town. Monf. de B——, acting as a * *Cavalier de la Maréchaussée*, conducted his brother to this place of exile, and there left him. A short time after, Monf. du F—— received an intimation, from that magistrate of Rouen who had interested himself in his misfortunes, that his father was on the point of obtaining another *lettre-de-cachet*, to remove him from Beauvais to some prison in the south of France, where he might never more be heard of.

This

* An officer of justice.

This gentleman added, that Mons. du F—— had not one moment to lose, and advised him immediately to attempt his escape.

Early on the morning after he received this intelligence, Mons. du F——, who had the liberty to walk about the town, fled from Beauvais. The person who brought him the letter from the magistrate, waited for him at a little distance from the town, and accompanied him on his journey. When they reached Lille in Flanders, not having a passport, they were obliged to wait from eleven o'clock at night till ten the next morning, before they could obtain permission from the Governor to proceed on their journey. Mons. du F—— concluded that he was pursued, and suffered the most dreadful apprehensions of being overtaken. His companion, with some address, at length obtained a passport, and attended him as far as Ostend. The wind proving contrary,

trary, he was detained two days in a state of the most distracting inquietude, and concealed himself on board the vessel on which he had taken his passage for England. At length the wind became favourable; the vessel sailed, and arrived late in the night at Margate. Monf. du F——, when he reached the English shore, knelt down, and, in a transport of joy, kissed the earth of that dear country which had twice proved his asylum.

He then inquired when the stage-coach set off for London, and was told that it went at so early an hour the next morning, that he could not go till the day after, as he must wait till his portmanteau was examined by the custom-house officers, who were now in bed. The delay of a few hours in seeing his wife and child, after such an absence, after such sufferings, was not to be endured: in a violent agitation of mind, he snatched up his portmanteau, and was going to fling it
into

into the sea, when he was prevented by the people near him, who said, that if he would pay the fees, his portmanteau should be sent after him. He eagerly complied with their demands, and set out for London. As he drew near, his anxiety, his impatience, his emotion increased. His present situation appeared to him like one of those delicious dreams, which sometimes visited the darkness of his dungeon, and for a while restored him, in imagination, to those he loved. Scarcely could he persuade himself that he was beyond the reach of oppression; that he was in a land of freedom; that he was hastening every moment towards his wife and child. When he entered London, his sensations became almost too strong to bear. He was in the very same place which his wife and child inhabited—but were they yet alive? were they in health? had Heaven indeed reserved for him the transport of holding them once more to his

his bosom, of mixing his tears with theirs? When he knocked at the door of the house where he expected to hear of Madame du F——, he had scarcely power to articulate his inquiries after her and his child. He was told that they were in health, but that Madame du F——, being in a situation six miles from London, he could not see her till the next morning. Monf. du F—— had not been in a bed for several nights, and was almost overcome with agitation and fatigue. He, however, instantly set out on foot for the habitation of his wife, announced himself to the mistress of the family, and remained in another apartment, while she, after making Madame du F—— promise that she would listen to her with calmness, told her, that there was a probability of her husband's return to England. He heard the sobs, the exclamations, of his wife at this intelligence—he could restrain no longer—he rushed into the room—he
flew

flew into her arms—he continued pressing her in silence to his bosom. She was unable to shed a tear; and it was not till after he had long endeavoured to soothe her by his tenderness, and had talked to her of her child, that she obtained relief from weeping. She then, with the most violent emotion, again and again repeated the same inquiries, and was a considerable time before she recovered any degree of composure.

All the fortune Mons. du F—— possessed when he reached London, was one half guinea; but his wife had, during his absence, saved ten guineas out of her little salary. You will easily imagine how valuable this hoard became in her estimation, when she could apply it to the precious use of relieving the necessities of her husband. Mons. du F—— went to London the next day, and hired a little garret: there, with a few books, a rush-light, and some straw in which he wrapped his
legs

legs to supply the want of fire, he recollected not the splendour to which he had once been accustomed, but the dungeon from which he had escaped. He saw his wife and child once a week; and, in those solitary moments when books failed to soothe his thoughts, he anticipated the hour in which he should again meet the objects most dear to his heart, and passed the intervals of time in philosophic resignation. His clothes being too shabby to admit of his appearing in the day, he issued from his little shed when it was dark, and endeavoured to warm himself by the exercise of walking.

Unfortunately he caught the small-pox; and his disorder rose to such a height, that his life was despaired of. In his delirium he used to recapitulate the sad story of his misfortunes; and when he saw any person near his bed-side, would call out, with the utmost vehemence,

“Qu’on

"* Qu'on fasse sortir tous les François!"

After having been for some days in the most imminent danger, Mons. du F—— recovered from this disease.

LETTER XXII.

SIX months after Mons. du F——'s return to England, his family found themselves compelled to silence the public clamours, by allowing him a small annual pension. Upon this, Madame du F—— quitted her place, and came to live with her husband and her child in an obscure lodging. Their little income received some addition by means of teaching the French language in a few private families.

A young lady, who came to pay me a visit at London in 1785, desired to take some lessons in French, and Madame du

F——

* Make all the French go out.

F—— was commended to us for that purpose. We soon perceived in her conversation every mark of a cultivated mind, and of an amiable disposition. She at length told us the history of her misfortunes, with the pathetic eloquence of her own charming language; and, after having heard that recital, it required but common humanity, to treat her with the respect due to the unhappy, and to feel for her sorrows that sympathy to which they had such claim. How much has the sensibility of Mons. and Madame du F—— over-rated those proofs of esteem and friendship which we were enabled to show them in their adversity!—But I must not anticipate.

On the 7th of October, 1787, the Baron died, leaving, besides Mons. du F——, two other sons, and a daughter.

I must here mention, that at the time when Mons. du F—— was confined to his bed in the prison of St. Yon, from the
confe-

consequences of his fall, his father, in order to avoid the clamours at Rouen, went for some weeks to Paris. He there made a will, disinheriting his eldest son. By the old laws of France, however, a father could not punish his son more than once for the same offence. Nor was there any thing in so mild a clause that could much encourage disobedience; since this single punishment, of which the mercy of the law was careful to avoid repetition, might be extended to residence for life in a dungeon. Such was evidently the intention of the Baron du F——: and though his son, disappointing this intention, had escaped with only three years of captivity, and some broken limbs, the benignant law above-mentioned interposed to prevent farther punishment, and left the Baron without any legal right to deprive Monf. du F—— of his inheritance. His brothers, being sensible of this, wrote to inform him of his father's death,

death, and recall him to France. He refused to go while the *lettre-de-cachet* remained in force against him. The Baron having left all his papers sealed up, which his younger sons could not open but in the presence of their brother, they obtained a revocation of the *lettre-de-cachet*, and sent it to Mons. du F——, who immediately set off for France.

The Baron's estate amounted to about four thousand pounds a year. Willing to avoid a tedious litigation with his brothers, Mons. du F—— consented to divide with them this property. But he soon found reason to repent of his imprudent generosity; those very brothers, on whom he had bestowed an equal share of his fortune, refusing to concur with him in his application to the Parliament of Rouen for the revocation of the *arrêt* against his marriage. Mons. du F——, surprised and shocked at their refusal, began to entertain some apprehensions of his

his personal safety; and dreading that, supported by the authority of his mother, another *lettre-de-cachet* might be obtained against him, he hastened back to England. Nor was it till after he had received assurances from several of the magistrates of Rouen, that they would be responsible for the safety of his person, that he again ventured to return to France, accompanied by Madame and Mademoiselle du F——, in order to obtain the revocation of the *arrêt*. On their arrival at Rouen, finding that the Parliament was exiled, and that the business could not be prosecuted at that time, they again came back to pass the winter in England.

In the following summer Mons. and Madame du F—— arrived in France, at the great epocha of French liberty, on the 15th of July, 1789, the very day after that on which the Bastille was taken. It was then that Mons. du F—— felt him-
self

self in security on his native shore.—It was then that his domestic comforts were no longer embittered with the dread of being torn from his family by a separation more terrible than death itself.—It was then that he no more feared that his repose at night would be broken by the entrance of ruffians prepared to drag him to dungeons, the darkness of which was never visited by the blessed beams of day!

He immediately took possession of his *château*, and only waits for the appointment of the new Judges, to solicit the revocation of the *arrêt* against his marriage, and to secure the inheritance of his estate to Mademoiselle du F——, his only daughter, who is now fifteen years of age, and is that very child who was born in the bosom of adversity, and whose infancy was exposed to all the miseries of want. May she never know the afflictions of her parents, but may she inherit their virtues!

Under the ancient government of France,
there

there might have been some doubt of Mons. du F——'s obtaining the revocation of the *arrêt* against his marriage. Beneath the iron hand of Despotism, justice and virtue might have been overthrown. But happier omens belong to the new Constitution of France. The Judges will commence their high office with that dignity becoming so important a trust, by cancelling an act of the most flagrant oppression. They will confirm that solemn, that sacred engagement which Mons. and Madame du F—— have three times vowed at the altar of God!—which has been sanctioned by laws human and divine—which has been ratified in earth and in heaven!

No sooner had Mons. and Madame du F—— taken possession of their property, than they seemed eager to convince us, how little this change of fortune was capable of obliterating, for one moment, the remembrance of the friends of their adversity.

versity. With all the earnestness of affection, they invited us to France, and appeared to think their prosperity incomplete, and their happiness imperfect, till we accepted the invitation. You will believe that we are not insensible witnesses of the delightful change in their fortune. We have the joy of seeing them, not only possessing all the comforts of affluence, but universal respect and esteem.

Monf. du F—— endeavours to banish misery from his possessions. His tenants consider him as a father, and “when the eye sees him, it blesses him.” I said to one of the peasants whom I met in my walk yesterday, * “Je suis charmée de voir que Monsieur est si bien aimé ici.” —“Oh, pour ça, oui, Madame! & à bonne raison, car il ne nous fait que du bien!”

Such is the history of Monf. du F——.

Has

* I am happy to see that Monsieur is so much beloved.—Oh, yes, Madam! and well he may; he does us nothing but good,

Has it not the air of romance? and are you not glad that the *dénouement* is happy? —Does not the old Baron die exactly in the right place; at the very page one would choose?—Or, if I sometimes wish that he had lived a little longer, it is only from that desire of retribution, which, in cases of injustice and oppression, it is so natural to feel.—It is only because the knowledge of the overthrow of the ancient government would have been a sufficient punishment to him for all his cruelty: he would have sickened at the sight of general happiness: the idea of liberty being extended to the lower ranks, while, at the same time, tyranny was deprived of its privileges, he would have found insupportable; and would have abhorred a country which could no longer boast of a Bastille; a country where iron cages were broken down, where dungeons were thrown open, and where justice was henceforth to shed a clear and steady light,

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without

without one dark shade of relief from *lettres-de-cachet*.

But peace be to his ashes ! If the recollection of his evil deeds excites my indignation, it is far otherwise with Monf. and Madame du F——. Never did I hear their lips utter an expression of resentment or disrespect towards his memory ; and never did I, with that warmth which belongs to my friendship for them, involuntarily pass a censure on his conduct, without being made sensible, by their behaviour, that I had done wrong.

Adieu !

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

I AM glad you think that a friend's having been persecuted, imprisoned, maimed, and almost murdered, under the ancient government of France, is a good excuse for loving the revolution. What, indeed, but friendship, could have led my attention from the annals of imagination to the records of politics; from the poetry to the prose of human life? In vain might Aristocrates have explained to me the rights of kings; and Democrates have descanted on the rights of the people. How many fine-spun threads of reasoning would my wandering thoughts have broken; and how difficult should I have found it to arrange arguments and inferences in the cells of my brain! But, however dull the faculties of my head,

I can assure you, that when a proposition is addressed to my heart, I have some quickness of perception. I can then decide, in one moment, points upon which philosophers and legislators have differed in all ages: nor could I be more convinced of the truth of any demonstration in Euclid, than I am, that, that system of politics must be the best, by which those I love are made happy.

Monf. du F——'s *château* is near the little town of Forges, celebrated for its mineral waters, and much resorted to in summer on that account. We went to the fountain, on pretence of drinking the waters, but in reality to see the company. The first morning we made our appearance, the ladies presented us with nosegays of fine spreading purple heath, which they called * *Bouquets à la fontaine*.

I was

* Nosegays of the fountain.

I was told, before I left England, that I should find that French liberty had destroyed French urbanity : but every thing I have seen and heard, since my arrival in France, has contradicted this assertion, and led me to believe that the French will carefully preserve, from the wreck of their monarchical government, the old charter they have so long held of superiority in politeness. I am persuaded the most determined Democrates of the nation, whatever other privileges they may choose to exercise, will always suffer the privilege of being rude to lie dormant.

In every country it is social pleasure that sheds the most delicious flowers which grow on the path of life ; but in France she covers the whole way with roses, and the traveller can scarcely mark its ruggedness. Happy are a people, so fond of talking as the French, in possessing a language modelled to all the charming purposes of conversation. Their turn of

expression is a dress that hangs so gracefully on gay ideas, that you are apt to suppose that wit, a quality parsimoniously distributed in other countries, is in France as common as the gift of speech. Perhaps that brilliant phraseology which dazzles a foreigner, may be familiar and common to a French ear: but how much ingenuity must we allow to a people who have formed a language, of which the commonplace phrases give you the idea of wit!

You, who are a reader of Madame Brulart's works, will know, that I am here on a sort of classic ground. The Abbaye de Bobec is but a few miles distant from this *château*, and I walk every day in the forest where Michel and Jaqueline erected their little hut; which, you may remember, having unfortunately built too low to admit of their standing upright, they comforted themselves with the reflection, * "Qu'on ne peut pas penser à tout;" and when

* One cannot think of every thing.

when they were once seated in their dwelling, in which it was a vain attempt to stand, expatiated on the comforts of being * “chez soi.” Upon inquiry, I have heard that poor Jaqueline, three years after the happy change in her fortune, was killed by a stroke of lightning, and that Michel (as he was bound to do, being the hero of a romance) died of grief.

The Abbé de Bobec has much reputation in this part of the country for wisdom; but a French gentleman, who dined with him yesterday, told me this morning, † “Il ma donné une indigestion de bon sens.” This is something in the style of a young Frenchman, who went to visit an acquaintance of his at Rotterdam, and has ever since called that worthy gentleman, ‡ “La raison continue (comme on

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dit

* At home.

† He gave me an indigestion of good sense.

‡ Reasoning continued, as you would speak of a fever with fresh paroxysms.

dit la fièvre continue) avec des redoublemens."

An alarm has been spread, but without any foundation, that the Austrian troops were marching to invade France. It puts me in mind of the old trick of the Roman patricians, who, whenever the plebeians grew refractory, called out, that the Equi and the Volsci were coming: the Equi and the Volsci, however, never came.

LETTER

LETTER XXIV.

WE have had a *fête* at the *château*, on the day of St. Augustin, who is Monsi. du F——'s patron; and, though Monsieur is become a Protestant, I hope he will always shew this mark of respect to his old friend St. Augustin. Indeed I am persuaded that Luther and Calvin, if they had been of our party, would have reconciled their minds to these charming rites of superstition.

The ceremonies began with a discharge of fuses; after which Mademoiselle du F—— entered the saloon, where a great crowd were assembled, with a crown of flowers in her hand, and addressed her father in these words:—* “Mon très-cher,

K 5

“papa,

* “My dearest papa, can I choose a more favourable moment to wish you an agreeable *fête* than
“this,

" papa, pourrois-je profiter d'un moment
 " plus favorable pour vous souhaiter une
 " bonne fête, que celui où nos bons &
 " *vrais amis* sont ici rassemblés, & s'unif-
 " sent à moi pour célébrer cet heureux
 " jour ? C'est dans vos biens, cher papa,
 " c'est dans votre château, que la Divine
 " Providence nous réunit, pour chanter
 " vos vertus, & ce courage héroïque qui
 " vous a fait supporter tous vos *malheurs*.
 " L'orage est passé ; jouissez maintenant,
 " cher,

" this, when our best, our faithful friends are here
 " assembled, and join with me in celebrating this
 " happy day ? It is in the midst of your possessions,
 " my dear papa, it is in your *château*, that Divine
 " Providence has re-united us, to declare your vir-
 " tues, and the heroic fortitude with which you have
 " supported your misfortunes. The storm is past,
 " and you can now, my dear papa, enjoy the happi-
 " ness you so well deserve, and the esteem of every
 " amiable mind. May your child contribute to your
 " felicity ! May the Supreme Being hear the prayers
 " which I address to him for the preservation of a
 " tender father, to whom I offer my duty, my gra-
 " titude, and the best affections of my heart !"

“ cher papa, du bonheur que vous méri-
“ tez si bien, de l'estime que vous vous
“ êtes acquis dans tous les cœurs sensibles.
“ Que votre chère enfant contribue à vo-
“ tre félicité ; que l'Eternel daigne exau-
“ cer les vœux que je lui adresse pour la
“ conservation & le bonheur d'un ten-
“ dre père, à qui j'offre mes hommages,
“ ma reconnoissance, & les sentimens
“ d'un cœur qui vous est tout dévoué.”

She then placed the crown of flowers upon his head, and he embraced her tenderly. A number of ladies advanced, presented him with nosegays, and were embraced in their turn.

We had seen, while we were at Paris, a charming little piece performed at the Théâtre de Monsieur, called “ La Fédération, ou La Famille Patriotique.” Madame du F—— sent for a copy of this piece, and it was now performed by the company assembled at the *château*. The tenants, with their wives and daughters,

formed the most considerable part of the audience; and I believe no play, in ancient or modern times, was never acted with more applause. My sister took a part in the performance, which I declined doing, till I recollected that one of the principal characters was a statue; upon which I consented to perform * *le beau rôle de la statue*. And, in the last scene, I, being the representative of Liberty, appeared with all her usual attributes, and guarding the consecrated banners of the nation, which were placed on an altar, on which was inscribed, in transparent letters, † “A la Liberté, 14 Juillet, 1779.” One of the performers, pointing to the statue, says, ‡ “Chaque peuple a décoré cette idole

* The fine part of the statue.

† To Liberty, July 14th, 1789.

‡ Every nation has decorated this idol with some peculiar attributes.—This cap has been long one of her most eloquent emblems.—Can we not add some others, which may, perhaps, become no less celebrated?

“ idole de quelques attributs qui lui sont
 “ particuliers.—Ce bonnet sur-tout est de-
 “ venu un emblème éloquent.—Ne pour-
 “ rions-nous pas en ajouter d’autres qui
 “ deviendront peut-être aussi célèbres ?”

He then unfolds a scarf of national rib-
 band, which had been placed at the foot
 of the altar, and adds, * “ Cette noble
 “ écharpe !—Ces couleurs si bien assorties
 “ ne sont-elles pas dignes de figurer aussi
 “ parmi les attributs de la Liberté ?”

The scarf was thrown over my shoulder,
 and the piece concluded with † “ Le Ca-
 “ rillon National :” after a grand chorus
 of ‡ *ça ira*, the performers ranged them-
 selves in order, and *ça ira* was danced :
ça ira hung on every lip, *ça ira* glowed on
 every countenance ! Thus do the French,
 left

* That noble scarf !—are not its auspicious
 colours worthy of appearing amongst the attributes
 of Liberty ?

† The national bells,

‡ It will go on,

lest they should be tempted, by pleasure, to forget one moment the cause of liberty, bind it to their remembrance in the hour of festivity, with fillets and scarfs of national ribband; connect it with the sound of the viol and the harp, and appoint it not merely to regulate the great movements of government, but to mould the figure of the dance. When the cotillon was finished, some beautiful fire-works were played off, and we then went to supper. * “Vous êtes bien placée, Monsieur,” said Madame du F—— to a young Frenchman, who was seated between my sister and me at table. † “Madame,” answered he, in a style truly French, “me voilà heureux pour la première fois, à vingt-trois ans.”

After supper we returned to the saloon, where the gentlemen danced with the peasant

* You are well placed, Sir.

† I am made happy, Madam, for the first time, at three and twenty years of age.

peasant girls, and the ladies with the peasants. A more joyous scene, or a set of happier countenances, my eyes never beheld. When I recollected the former situation of my friends, the spectacle before me seemed an enchanting vision: I could not forbear, the whole evening, comparing the past with the present; and, while I meant to be exceedingly merry, I felt that tears, which would not be suppressed, were gushing from my eyes—but they were tears of luxury.

LETTER

LETTER XXV.

A DECREE has passed in the National Assembly, instituting rewards for literary merit. The proposal met with great opposition from one of the Members—I do not wish to remember his name, who said the State stood in need of husbandmen, not poets; as if the State would be encumbered by having both. This gentleman thinks, that, provided wheat and oats flourish, the culture of *mind* may be dispensed with; and that, if the spade and harrow are sharpened, the quill of genius may be stripped of all its feathers.

* *Mais, vive l'Assemblée Nationale!*—they have determined never to abolish the *nobility* of the Muses, or deprive the fine arts † *de leurs droits honorifiques*.

A-propos

* Long live the National Assembly.

† Of their honorary rights.

A-propos of poets.—The French have conquered many old prejudices, but their prejudice against Shakespeare still exists. They well know, that though in England it is our policy, or our pleasure, to have an opposition on every other subject, we have not one dissenting voice about Shakspeare; and therefore they allow that he may, perhaps, deserve to be the idol of the British nation, a sort of household god whom we delight to honour; but they have gods of their own to whom they pay homage, and have little idea that Shakespeare was not only the glory of England, but of human nature. It would be a hopeless attempt to convince them, that the genius of their boasted Corneille has something of the proud and affected greatness of Lewis the Fourteenth, while that of Shakespeare has more affinity to the noble dignified simplicity of Henry the Fourth. They repeat, till you are weary of the remark, that French tragedies

dies are regular dramas, while Shakespeare's plays are monsters. This reminds me of Boileau's answer to an author who had brought him a play to read, of which Boileau disapproved. Sir, exclaimed the enraged author, I defy malice to say that my piece transgresses any one of the rules. "Why, Sir," replied Boileau, "it transgresses the first rule of all, "that of keeping the reader awake."

The young gentleman who, as I mentioned to you, was confined at St. Yon, in the cell adjoining *Monf. du F——*'s, and with whom he used to converse in whispers through a whole in the wall, is come to pay a visit at the *château*. This young man went very early into the army: but, at the age of twenty, his father being at St. Domingo, and his mother considering her son as a spy upon her conduct, which was such as shrunk from inspection, obtained a *lettre-de-cachet* against him, and he was confined three years

years at St. Yon. He has told me, that, after the first year, he lost all hope of ever regaining his liberty. A morbid melancholy seized his mind; he lay stretched on the same bed for two years, and sometimes refused to taste food for several days together. When his father, at his return from St. Domingo, came to liberate him, he was so feeble that he was unable to walk.

His father again left France, and the brother of this young man has suffered a fate even more severe than himself. At the age of fifteen, he was guilty of some indiscretions, which incurred the resentment of his unrelenting mother, and another *lettre-de-cachet* was obtained.—“Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts?”—He was confined ten years, and only released when all the prisons were thrown open, by order of the National Assembly. But for this unhappy young man their mercy came too late—

late—His reason was gone for ever! and he was led out of his prison, at the age of five and twenty, a maniac. When the sensibility with which his brother relates these family misfortunes melts us into tears, we are told, * *que la tristesse est la maladie du charbon Anglois*, and will never be tolerated in France.

You will not be surprised to hear that Monf. du F—— has, with great complacency, relinquished his title; and that, being a *ci-devant* CAPTIVE, as well as a *ci-devant* BARON, he feels that the enjoyment of personal security, the sweetness of domestic comfort, in short, that the common rights of man are of more value than he ever found the rights of nobility in the solitude of his dungeon. He is ready to acknowledge, that confinement in a subterraneous cell, a fall from a height of fifty feet, and the fracture of his limbs, are

* Melancholy is the disease of English coal-fires.

are things which even the title of Baron can scarcely counterbalance; and he therefore drinks a libation, every day after dinner, * *à la santé de l'Assemblée Nationale*, though they have deprived him of the soothing epithet of Monseigneur. We, however, shall soon cease to pledge him in this toast. The day of our departure draws near. We must leave the charming society at the *château*—we must leave the peasants dance under the shade of the old elms, while the setting sun pours streams of liquid gold through the foliage—we must leave † *le maître de violon, qui se ride en riant, avec sa malheureuse figure*.—All this must we leave!—Tomorrow is the last day of our residence at the *château*. What a desolate word is that monosyllable of *last*—how sad, how emphatical

* To the health of the National Assembly.

† The player on the violin, who, with his miserable figure, has become wrinkled from laughing.

emphatical its meaning!—There is something in it which gives the most indifferent things an interest in our affections.—I am sure I could write a volume with this little word for my text; but I may as well explain myself in one line—I am sorry to leave France!

LETTER

LETTER XXVI.

London.

WE left France early in September, that we might avoid the equinoctial gales; but were so unfortunate as to meet, in our passage from Dieppe to Brighton, with a very violent storm. We were two days and two nights at sea, and beat four and twenty hours off the coast of Brighton; and it would be difficult for you, who have formed your calculations of time on dry land, to guess what is the length of four and twenty hours in a storm at sea. At last, with great difficulty, we landed on the beach, where we found several of our friends and acquaintance, who, supposing that we might be among the passengers, sympathised with our danger, and were anxious for our preservation.

Before the storm became so serious as

to exclude every idea but that of preparing to die with composure, I could not help being diverted with the comments on French customs, and French politics, which passed in the cabin. "Ah!" says one man to his companion, "one had need to go to France, to know how to like old England when one gets back again."—"For my part," rejoined another, "I've never been able to get drunk once the whole time I was in France—not a drop of porter to be had—and as for their victuals, they call a bit of meat of a pound and a half, a fine piece of roast beef."—"And pray," added he, turning to one of the sailors, "What do you think of their National Assembly?" "Why," says the sailor, "if I ben't mistaken, the National Assembly has got some points from the wind."

I own it has surprised me not a little, since I came to London, to find that most of my acquaintance are of the same opinion

nion with the sailor. Every visitor brings me intelligence from France full of dismay and horror. I hear of nothing but crimes, assassinations, torture, and death. I am told that every day witnesses a conspiracy; that every town is the scene of a massacre; that every street is blackened with a gallows, and every highway deluged with blood. I hear these things, and repeat to myself, —Is this the picture of France? Are these the images of that universal joy, which called tears into my eyes, and made my heart throb with sympathy? —To me, the land which these mighty magicians have suddenly covered with darkness, where, waving their evil wand, they have reared the dismal scaffold, have clotted the knife of the assassin with gore, have called forth the shriek of despair, and the agony of torture—to me, this land of desolation appeared dressed in additional beauty beneath the genial smile of Liberty. The woods seemed to cast a

L

more

more refreshing shade, and the lawns to wear a brighter verdure, while the carols of freedom burst from the cottage of the peasant, and the voice of joy resounded on the hill, and in the valley.

Must I be told, that my mind is perverted, that I am become dead to all sensations of sympathy, because I do not weep with those who have lost a part of their superfluities, rather than rejoice that the oppressed are protected, that the wronged are redressed, that the captive is set at liberty, and that the poor have bread? Did the Universal Parent of the human race implant the feelings of pity in the heart, that they should be confined to the artificial wants of vanity, the ideal deprivations of greatness; that they should be fixed beneath the dome of the palace, or locked within the gate of the *château*; without extending one commiserating sigh to the wretched hamlet, as if its famished inhabitants, though not ennobled by *man*, did not

not bear, at least, the ensigns of nobility stamped on our nature by God?

Must I hear the charming societies, in which I found all the elegant graces of the most polished manners, all the amiable urbanity of liberal and cultivated minds, compared with the most rude, ferocious, and barbarous levellers that ever existed? Really, some of my English acquaintance, whatever objections they may have to republican principles, do, in their discussions of French politics, adopt a most free and republican style of censure. Nothing can be more democratical than their mode of expression, or display a more levelling spirit than their unqualified contempt of *all* the leaders of the revolution.

It is not my intention to shiver lances, in every society I enter, in the cause of the National Assembly. Yet I cannot help remarking, that, since the Assembly does not presume to set itself up as an example

this country, we seem to have very little right to be furiously angry, because they think proper to try another system of government themselves. Why should they not be suffered to make an experiment in politics? I have always been told, that the improvement of every science depends upon experiment. But I now hear, that, instead of their new attempt to form the great machine of society upon a simple principle of general amity, upon the FEDERATION of its members, they ought to have repaired the feudal wheels and springs, by which their ancestors directed its movements. Yet, if mankind had always observed this retrograde motion, it would surely have led them to few acquisitions in virtue, or in knowledge; and we might even have been worshipping the idols of paganism at this moment. To forbid, under the pains and penalties of reproach, all attempts of the human mind to advance to greater

greater perfection, seems to be proscribing every art and science: and we cannot much wonder that the French, having received so small a legacy of public happiness from their forefathers, and being sensible of the poverty of their own patrimony, should try new methods of transmitting a richer inheritance to their posterity.

Perhaps the improvements which mankind may be capable of making in the art of politics, may have some resemblance to those they have made in the art of navigation. Perhaps our political plans may hitherto have been somewhat like those ill-constructed misshapen vessels, which, unfit to combat with the winds and waves, were only used by the ancients to convey the warriors of one country to despoil and ravage another neighbouring state; which only served to produce an intercourse of hostility, a communication of injury, an exchange of rapine

pine and devastation.—But it may possibly be within the compass of human ability to form a system of politics, which, like a modern ship of discovery, built upon principles that defy the opposition of the tempestuous elements, (“and passions are the elements of life”—) instead of yielding to their fury makes them subservient to its purpose, and sailing sublimely over the untracked ocean, unites those together whom nature seemed for ever to have separated, and throws a line of connexion across the divided world.

One cause of the general dislike in which the French revolution is held in this country, is the exaggerated stories which are carefully circulated by such of the aristocrats as have taken refuge in England. They are not all, however, persons of this description. There is now a young gentleman in London, nephew to the Bishop de Sens, who has lost his fortune, his rank,
all

all his high expectations, and yet who has the generosity to applaud the revolution, and the magnanimity to reconcile himself to personal calamities, from the consideration of general good; and who is "faithful found" to his country, "among the faithless." I hope this amiable young Frenchman will live to witness, and to share the honours, the prosperity, of that regenerated country; and I also hope that the National Assembly of France will answer the objections of its adversaries in the manner most becoming its own dignity, by forming such a constitution as will render the French nation virtuous, flourishing, and happy.

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